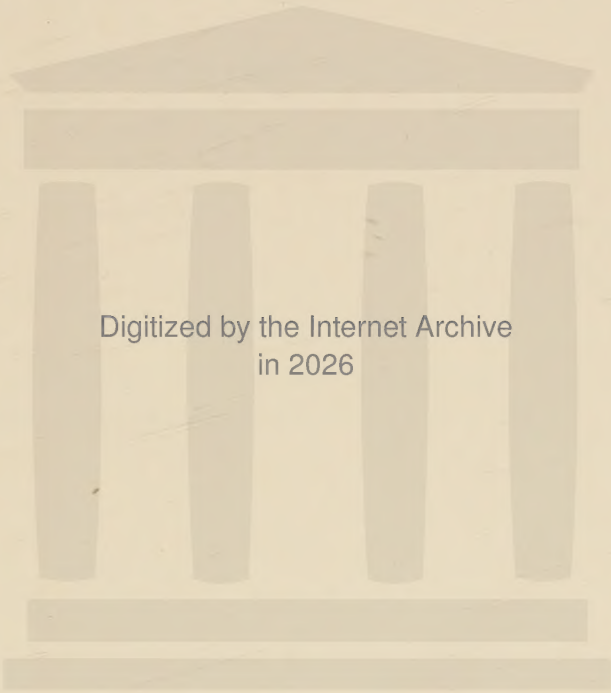
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THE

FORM OF THE CHRISTIAN TEMPLE:

BEING A TREATISE ON THE CONSTITUTION

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH.

BY

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"Quare, si solus Christus audiendus est, non debemus attendere quid alius ante nos faciendum esse putaverit, sed quid qui ante omnes est Christus prior. Neque enim hominis consuetudinem sequi oportet, sed Dei veritatem."—CYPRIAN, *Ep. ad Cæcilium*, lxiii. 14.

"Nolo humanis documentis sed divinis oraculis sanctam Ecclesiam demonstrari."—AUGUSTINE, *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, iii. 6.

"Let two plans of government as far as we can see be equally good and expedient in themselves, yet if there be a fair probability of the one rather than the other proceeding from our blessed Lord Himself, those who love Him in sincerity will know at once which to prefer."—*Tracts for the Times*, No. 4.

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PREFACE.

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THE main design of the following treatise is to bring distinctly under the eye of the inquirer those passages of the Holy Scriptures, which are supposed to bear directly or indirectly on the subject of Church Polity; to find out the principles or facts which these passages underlie; and to combine such facts and principles, with the view of ascertaining whether they do, or do not, contain the outlines of a form of Church government. Modern forms come under notice, only in so far as they have admitted principles unknown to the ancient institution set up by the apostles of the Lord. In the opinion of the writer, all the Christian Verities are contained in the Bible; anything not expressed or implied in the inspired record, however beautiful, or useful, or old, is only human, and no part of the faith "once for all delivered unto the saints." The object of the writer is thus to try by a process of inductive reasoning to discover what the only divine rule of faith and practice teaches on the subject of Ecclesiastical Polity; to ascertain whether this is sufficient to constitute the substantial parts of a system; and in this way to give a practical answer to the question—"What form of Church government is laid down in the word of God?"

The plan followed out in the investigation has been:—

1. To ascertain by direct examination of the inspired record the nature of those TEMPORARY AGENCIES employed by the Lord Jesus in setting up the Christian Church, but which

passed away at the close of the apostolic age. These correspond to the scaffolding essential at the erection of some great edifice, but always removed when the building is complete.

2. To determine those PERMANENT PRINCIPLES which entered into the constitution of the Church while under the personal guidance of the apostles, and which, being set up under their eye and left uncondemned, must be regarded as having their approval. These constitute the pillars, the covering, the dome, which cannot be removed, or have other things put in their place, without endangering the stability and comfort of the edifice.

3. To examine and refute some other principles which have since crept into the constitution of the Church under the guise of utility and ornament, but which have altered it for the worse, and in the course of ages have wrought it serious evil. Time and space were not sufficient to notice all the omissions and additions of an ecclesiastical nature; but those noticed are among the most prevalent and dangerous of their kind. Like the cloud seen by the prophet's servant from the mountain-top, they were small at the beginning, but they have since spread and spread, till now they cover the sky. These correspond to buttresses, minarets, spires, and other adornments set up by human wisdom to beautify and strengthen the edifice, but which usually fail of their design. Some have become so fond of these HUMAN ADDITIONS, that they now regard them as parts of the original plan, and essential to the grandeur of the building: others, like ourselves, regard them as needless, mere clumsy contrivances of human skill, without the sanction of the Great Architect, intended to please the unspiritual senses, and in reality obscuring the Divine.

The Right Rev. Dr. Wordsworth, Bishop of St. Andrews, has publicly proposed a reconsideration of the differences between Episcopacy and Presbyterianism, with a view to their removal and adjustment. This is no more than is reasonable,

and fair, and right. His *Outlines of the Christian Ministry* is his personal contribution to that desirable object. The present treatise is ours. The very first thing that on such an inquiry ought to be considered is what the Holy Scriptures, regarded by him and by us as "containing all things necessary to salvation," and "the rule and ultimate standard of faith," have said as to doctrine, worship, and polity. Once that point is agreed upon, everything else ought to be easy. The Divine we are bound to hold fast and never let go: the Human is a fit subject for compromise. The former is the pure gold: the latter is only dross which at first sight looks like gold. Once we have separated the Divine from the Human, Episcopalians and Presbyterians will then be fully assured as to what they both are bound at all hazards to retain, and what with advantage they can afford to throw away.

The Author cannot conclude without stating his conviction, founded on a careful examination of the word of God, that Church Polity is an important portion of Christianity. Its main principles are divinely revealed: its design is to conserve and to perpetuate truth, as well as to secure decency and order in worship, in instruction, and in administration; while it is often on the side of Church government, and generally under cover of indistinct and uncertain notions regarding it, that minute changes have crept into the Church which have in the course of centuries blossomed out into serious error. If the Roman and Anglican Communions are found to attach an extravagant value to that form of polity which they find set up among them, the Reformed and Lutheran Churches have erred on the other side by underestimating the value of that set up of old by the apostles and prophets, and which the Scriptures hand down to us as divine. Purity of doctrine and purity of worship are treasures to be zealously guarded; but purity of polity, though not essential but only helpful to salvation, is essential to the whole truth as presented in the word of God, and to

which Christ came into the world to bear witness. When some who should know better make light of the subject, and seem to question whether God has spoken upon it at all, the only thing this proves is, that they have not studied the matter with attention. To assist them in an honest effort to understand a subject so important and so interesting, is the principal reason why the present work is submitted to the public.

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THE FORM OF THE CHRISTIAN TEMPLE.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is open to our inward eye at this moment the vision of a grand and imposing edifice, of antique shape and magnificent proportions. Its dimensions are so vast, and its inhabitants so numerous, that it seems not so much a solitary dwelling as a city set upon a hill. We are lost in wonder as we think of the people, dead and living, who have made that house their home, and who for ages have found shelter within its walls,—of the sufferings through which they have passed, of the works they have accomplished, and of the influence they have exerted upon the world. But at present we can examine only the outward form of the building. All parts are not of the same age. Parts of it are modern; other parts quaint in their construction, and hoary with time. On some wings and portions of the structure the mark of the chisel and hammer is fresh; on others we can trace the moss and lichens of age. As a rule, the ancient masonry is almost buried out of sight and lies close to the foundation; the ornamental portion—the dome, the pinnacles, and minarets that crown the building—are modern in design and execution. This edifice is the CHURCH as it exists at present among men. Our purpose is to dig around the foundations, and to ascertain to what extent it rests on the solid rock; to examine the architecture, with the view of discovering where the divine workmanship ends and the human begins; and to decide for ourselves whether the modern additions lend any true lustre

to the glory of the edifice. To aid us in our self-imposed task we have open before us the original plan, sketched by no merely human hand, of which the structure before us is intended to be the realization and completion.

DIFFICULTIES OF THE INQUIRY.

The opinion of all theologians who have not carefully studied the subject is, that no system of Church polity is contained in the New Testament; that if so, it cannot be determined with precision; or if it can be so determined, it is not obligatory on the Church of after times, and, of course, is practically useless. This opinion, it will be seen, we dispute in all its parts. We must admit, however, that some, after careful search, have failed to find in the New Testament any Church system whatever; that some who profess to find a system there revealed, differ as to what it is; and that some who think they have discovered the leading principles of the divine system, do not seem to recognise the obligation to carry out into practice the system which they have discovered. The variety of opinion on the subject does seem strange; but it may be accounted for in the most natural way by the special difficulty of the case.

The difficulty is mainly owing to the following causes:—

1. The Christian Church does not occupy new ground. It is erected upon a site where stood previously another divine system, and it is not evident to what extent the superstructure is entirely new, or raised upon the old foundations. Men naturally enough differ as to how far the elements of the Jewish system enter into the Christian. Doctrine and morality, taught in the Old Testament, form a large part of Christianity. Men may fairly ask, is the same not true in regard to the principles of Church government?

2. These principles in the Scriptures are not arranged in systematic form. Facts incidentally stated in one connection

need to be supplemented by facts recorded somewhere else in similar fashion. Industry is required to bring these facts together, and skill must combine and harmonize them so as to make them the basis of a practice or principle. But a fact may be present to one mind which another entirely overlooks; or of two facts present to an inquirer, one may appear very important and the other insignificant, while a second inquirer may regard them in the very opposite light. The difference of method, also, in combining them and harmonizing them may of itself lead to diversity of result.

3. Ecclesiastical principles found in the Scriptures do not often appear there in the form of commands. Usually they are set before us, not as direct precepts, but as a part of apostolic and primitive practice. They seem to crop up undesignedly, as if the writers did not mean to convey that they were matters of paramount importance or of universal obligation. It is not clear how far other Christians, in circumstances more or less different, are bound to do the same thing exactly.

4. The historical records of the New Testament Churches are brief and scanty. The apostolic Epistles are mostly addressed to Churches recently formed, and some of them, perhaps, not fully organized. The advice given is adapted to the circumstances then present. Oral instruction may have communicated much which it was not necessary should be written. Multitudes of circumstances and situations, such as are constantly found in Churches which have lived for centuries, did not come at the time within the horizon of the writer's vision, and were not present to his thoughts. What an inspired man would have said and done in regard to Churches placed in circumstances of a very different kind we are left without means of knowing; we can only conjecture.

5. Mixed up with the everyday facts of the age, we notice at every step the presence of the supernatural; apostles and prophets possessed of inspiration, and gifted brethren who

work wonders, speak with tongues, and manifest miraculous powers. These extraordinary agencies enter so much into the daily operations of the Church in the apostolic period, that it is hard to conceive what the Church would have been had they not been present. Nor is it easy to determine, we are free to admit, how far the authority which these persons exercised, apart from their supernatural gifts and powers, was intended to be permanent. Did the authority, peculiar to their position as the commissioned agents of the Lord, die with themselves, or did a portion of it continue after the supernatural powers by which it was authenticated were finally withdrawn?

6. It is also very difficult not to look at the past through the coloured glass of the present. We find some ecclesiastical arrangement now in working order approved and useful. We look for it in the apostolic age, and feel disappointed if it does not appear. Individual congregations are now represented by a minister and elder in a Church court; we can scarcely be persuaded that the same arrangement did not exist in the apostolic council. Titus is sent to ordain elders; but as in some Churches ordination now is limited to prelates, the inference seems easy that Titus was a prelate, and that the apostle who sent Titus must have been an archbishop. Thus, we allow the light of existing facts unduly to colour our judgment of the past, and we infer that if a thing now is, it must have always been so. This is a very common source of error. The tendency among all men is to see in the New Testament what they wish to see there.

7. That the New Testament contains all necessary information on the subject which the Holy Spirit deemed it right to communicate, there can be no doubt; yet, when all the recorded facts stand out clearly before us, there is in them an apparent want of completeness that produces a feeling akin to disappointment. On some points the inspired oracles are dumb. On other matters they present facts which seem

unsuited to the present age, and which could with difficulty be revived in modern society. The environments which surround us moderns are so different from those which existed in the first century of Christianity, that their reproduction is next to impossible. At every turn we ask ourselves, could the New Testament system in all its parts be restored? If so, would it work? And if so, would it be permanent? Would there not be in it, as at first, a strong tendency to pass into something else, and to leave in its place something quite at variance with itself?

ENCOURAGEMENTS.

The advantages of a divine system over the most cunning construction of human wisdom are so obvious, that notwithstanding all difficulties we are always encouraged to attempt its recovery. The obstacles, perhaps, cannot be altogether removed, but they may be diminished.

1. Diligence may collect and compare the scattered statements of divine revelation, so as to enable us to obtain an accurate outline of the leading principles of apostolic polity. We may not be able to reproduce details, or to answer from the record every question which can be asked upon the subject, yet we may find enough to determine our duty, and to guide us practically in the matter.

2. If instruction upon the outward form of the Church is conveyed in an indirect way, this may remind us that however important the subject is in itself, no such importance attaches even to the divine form of the Church as to the scheme of salvation, or to the doctrines and duties of the gospel, which are so often and so directly taught. Nevertheless, apostolic precedent on behalf of a system, or even part of a system, gives it great weight, and raises any principle, for which such precedent can be proved, to a position of moral superiority above any mere device or arrangement of human wisdom.

3. In discussing the state of things which existed in New Testament times, we cannot indeed leave out of account the apostles and prophets, who were then the most prominent agents in spreading Christianity and in organizing the Church; but it must be remembered that the real question is not what were the supernatural agencies by which the Church was established, and which have long since been withdrawn. For us the practical inquiry is, what was the ordinary everyday system which the apostles set up, and which they left in operation when they passed out of the world? Some think they find precedent for most Christian institutions in the synagogue system, or in the practices of Gentile society at the time. With such inquiries, more curious than useful, we do not trouble ourselves; it is sufficient for us to endeavour to ascertain what principles had apostolic sanction, be their origin what it may.

4. To be familiar with these principles, and especially with the scriptural foundation on which they rest, is an attainment that to any Christian must be of great practical value. Even intelligent men, who have never given special attention to the subject, are ready to suppose that Scripture contains nothing decisive on the subject, that all systems are equally scriptural or nearly so, and that the system is really best which they find in actual life to be best administered. To men of this temper, every system seems equally scriptural, and therefore no system is of special value. Others under-estimate the scriptural system: because it does not bulk so largely in the New Testament as the doctrinal pillars of Christianity, they incline to the extreme of supposing that it is a matter much too small for any serious attention. They will not study it for themselves, nor will they submit with patience to receive instruction upon it from others. The result is that few understand a matter to the root of which they have never gone. Conflicting opinions are afloat which Christians in general do not know whether to receive or reject. Under

these circumstances, to be convinced of what the word of God really teaches, steadies a man for life, and keeps him from being carried about by every wind of opinion. It supplies him with a divine test that he can apply rigidly to all existing systems as the occasion offers, and enables him to judge whether they are divine or not.

5. Another consideration is, that many of the errors which for ages have clung to some portions of the Church, and are at this day weakening the spiritual life of its members, have entered it on the side of Church government. The Christian ministry has blossomed out into a hierarchy. The arrangements for discipline have in the course of ages developed into auricular confession, penance, and absolution. Headship in one quarter has terminated in the supremacy of the civil power, in another it has landed in the Papacy. If Christians had been well instructed in what the Scriptures teach on these and kindred matters, this knowledge might not in this fallen world have prevented the manifestation of these errors, but it would have checked their development and made it more difficult for mankind to be deceived by them. The evils which have arisen, and which have developed more rapidly owing to the prevailing ignorance on the subject, show the importance of giving it special attention.

OBJECTS OF THE INQUIRY.

In investigating the constitution of the New Testament Church, we decline to follow the example of those writers who set out by assuming that certain principles now found in the Church are excellent in themselves, who argue that they must have always existed, and who go back to apostolic times in order to explain Scripture in consistency with them. Not only is this practice vicious in argument, but its tendency is to confuse the right method of inquiry and to darken the truth. We prefer to go at once to the word of God, and to

ascertain so far as it is possible the practices and principles that existed in the Church with the approval of the apostles of Christ; to show the evidence for these principles that is found in the Scriptures; and to point out the advantages of giving them their legitimate effect. If it would not protract the investigation to an inordinate length, we would wish to show, not only how the same principles were recognised in those years which followed most closely on the first century, but how a gradual process of innovation resulted in an actual departure from the primitive forms, and also in a series of human institutions, which have since taken the place of divine principles, and in their operation have inflicted great damage on the Church. We would like to show how undivine and human these institutions were, and to point out how the Reformation was a great and an honest but still imperfect attempt to throw off these ecclesiastical inventions, and to restore what is lost. But the task is too great for our strength; we can only carry out a part of the plan.

Though we may for our own satisfaction and guidance endeavour by a rigid induction of facts to ascertain what the leading features of the scriptural polity were, we must, however, never forget that the perfect realization of the New Testament Church constitution, as it stood in the age of the apostles, is impossible. To imagine that it can be set up again in the world exactly as it then was is only a romantic dream. The conditions and circumstances of one age can never be entirely reproduced in another. Not to speak of the temporary agencies which once existed, but which God has now withdrawn, nor of the Jewish and pagan environments by which the Church was then encircled, but which cannot affect it now to the same extent, nor of the immense number of different nations and languages now in its membership, there are features of the apostolic age so much at variance with modern ideas of utility and convenience that they could not be revived. The kiss of charity, the community of goods,

the absence of Church edifices for Christian worship, and the one Church in the one city, could not be restored even if it were desirable. To attempt it would be a failure. Such practices did not survive long after they were first set up, and it is all but certain they would not survive long if they were called into existence again. Such an idea, we say, once for all, is utterly out of the question.

Not only so, but new conditions, unexpected and inevitable, are constantly cropping up, and new conditions require an adaptation of Christianity, not in its essential and imperishable substance, but in its external form and arrangements. New forces are ever coming into play; and new facts, such as the art of printing, the discovery of new continents, the rise of Churches in diverse nations, the great variety of living languages, facilities of travel and communication, an educated ministry, a higher average of intelligence among the people, have all combined to produce a state of things which forbid the Christian Church going back to what it was in its infancy before such forces began to exist, and which Christianity, instead of ignoring, must seize upon and turn to account in order to effect its great purposes. But where it can possibly be done, we should always study to approximate closely to the divine pattern, and see to it that elements of heavenly origin are preserved, perpetuated, and applied.

It must be our endeavour, therefore, to discover in the written word of God the great constitutional principles which have the stamp of divinity upon them; to fasten upon those which from their weight and importance seem to be the very pillars of the ecclesiastical fabric; to separate them from other practices which seem to carry on their face more of the variable and temporary and local; to present the scriptural grounds on which they rest; to show that they are advantageous in themselves, and with slight modifications are capable of being adapted to every age and country, and that the Church can never let them slip or fall away from them

without loss and damage to herself. To the student of Church history it is plain that while the New Testament Church possessed these principles and practices, and that while the age immediately succeeding acknowledged them; yet that every one of them was either corrupted, or obscured, or hidden, or extinguished in after times; and that owing to changes in the ecclesiastical constitution, the popular apprehension of the faith was very seriously impaired. The substance of the egg is of more value than the shell, but the shell cannot be injured without destroying the germ of life that it encloses and protects. We cannot be indifferent to the purity and polity of the Church without endangering less or more the treasures which that system is meant to enshrine. What is now known as Popery, is simply the aggregate of errors—doctrinal, ritual, and ecclesiastical—into which Christianity, owing to its undergoing an infinite number of small changes, has grown in less than nineteen hundred years. The great revolution of the sixteenth century, known as the Reformation, checked for a time the downward progress of error, so that in this point of view it has proved of service to the unreformed Church itself. But in the case of the Lutheran, the Reformed, and the Anglican Churches, the movement was a bold and partially successful effort to throw off the mass of superincumbent error, and to restore the spiritual foundations of the first and purest age of Christianity.

BOOK I.

TEMPORARY AGENCIES.

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Hints were dropped by our blessed Redeemer during His ministry on earth, and acts were done by Him, from which we may infer something of His mind and will in regard to the government of the Church. When He said, "My kingdom is not of this world," we might infer, for example, that the Church is intended to be an organized society, in which law and order are to prevail, and that it is to be spiritual in its nature and aims. The fact that out of the multitude of the disciples He chose first the Twelve and then the Seventy, indicates His preference for a special ministry to preach the kingdom of God. The rebuke administered to His disciples, when they contended with each other for superiority, is virtually a pronouncement against any Church system the tendency of which is to encourage haughtiness of spirit and worldly ambition. The exhortation to "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's," suggests that Church and State are two distinct organizations, and that the duties which we owe to the one may be different in kind from those which we owe to the other. But mere hints are insufficient of themselves. They may confirm our belief in a system already established by direct proof, but do not afford a basis of sufficient strength on which the pillars of a system can rest.

The fact is, that throughout His earthly life, the Lord Jesus was only making preparation for the kingdom, which was not set up in visible and separate form till after His

resurrection. He did not announce that the kingdom of heaven is come, but only that it is "at hand." He did not during His life organize a visible society apart from the Jewish Church of the time: He made arrangements, however, for having that step taken after His death. He selected from His followers certain men whom He imbued with His own spirit, and trained to be the teachers and guides of the new organization. His personal ministry and miracles attached to Him a band of devoted adherents, who, without severing abruptly their old Jewish connection, afterwards became the nucleus of the new Christian society, which from the first it was designed to form, and by their means the identity of the Church of God, in passing from the one dispensation into the other, was maintained and perpetuated. The divine mission of Jesus, His incarnation, ministry, miracles, death, resurrection, and glory, supplied the necessary foundation of truth, upon which the gospel invitation was to rest. Before His ascension, He instituted the ordinances of the Supper and of Baptism—the two most distinctive rites of the Christian Church. After the resurrection He gave special instruction to the Twelve in matters relating to His kingdom, commissioned them to perform the great work which lay before them in the world, and commanded them to wait at Jerusalem for the descent of the Holy Spirit, promised by the Father, whose advent was the signal for that work to begin.

The Christian Church dates from that Pentecost on which the Holy Spirit fell upon the apostles. Everything that went before was only preparatory; from that day the followers of Jesus stood out before the world as a distinct and separate society, associated for objects in common, and into whose fellowship persons were admitted by a special rite. Thus it was that the Lord personally did not organize the Church, but He put matters in train, and authorized His apostles to do so. What was done by the apostles under His commission was virtually done by Himself; He is the true founder of the Church. In this great work He made use of extraordinary and temporary, no less than of ordinary and permanent agencies. It is with the latter that the present inquiry is specially concerned, but the two are so mixed up with each other, that the former cannot be omitted.

Under the head of Temporary Agencies we include not only apostles, prophets, and evangelists, but the various spiritual gifts or charisms with which so many of the first Christians were endowed. The presence of these men, and the supernatural gifts of which they were possessed in such variety and abundance, constitute the distinctive characteristic of the Church in the New Testament age.

CHAPTER I.—THE APOSTLES.

EVIDENCE OF SCRIPTURE.

Appointment of the Apostles.

And He called unto Him His twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease, and all manner of sickness. . . . And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils.—MATT. x. 1, 7, 8.

And He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have authority to cast out devils.—MARK iii. 14, 15.

When it was day He called His disciples; and He chose from them twelve, whom also He named apostles.—LUKE vi. 13.

Paul, an apostle, not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father.—GAL. i. 1.

Whereunto I was appointed a preacher and an apostle . . . a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.—1 TIM. ii. 7.

Their Qualifications.

But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.—JOHN xiv. 26.

When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth . . . and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come.—JOHN xvi. 13.

Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be my witnesses, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.—ACTS i. 8.

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.—ACTS ii. 4.

Him God raised up the third day, and gave Him to be made manifest, not to all people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the

dead. And He charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is He which is ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.—Acts x. 40–42.

Am I not an apostle? have I not seen Jesus our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?—1 Cor. ix. 1.

Have we no right to lead about a wife that is a believer, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, have we not a right to forbear working? —1 Cor. ix. 5, 6.

The mystery of Christ; which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit.—Eph. iii. 5.

Their Authority and Rank.

Verily I say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.—Matt. xviii. 18.

Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.—Matt. xxviii. 18–20.

And He said, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned. — Mark xvi. 15, 16.

Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so I send you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosesoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them: whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained.—John xx. 21–23.

In the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.—Matt. xix. 28.

God hath set some in the Church, first apostles.—1 Cor. xii. 28.

I reckon that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.— 2 Cor. xi. 5.

Their Work.

Of the men therefore which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us . . . of these must one become a witness with us of His resurrection.—Acts i. 21, 22.

They went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed.—Mark xvi. 20.

With great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.—Acts iv. 33.

I will not dare to speak of any things save those which Christ wrought through me, for the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Ghost: so that from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ; yea, making it my aim so to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation.—Rom. xv. 18–20.

I think God hath set forth us the apostles last of all, as men doomed to death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.—1 Cor. iv. 9.

I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.—1 Cor. xi. 23.

The Signs of an Apostle.

Many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.—Acts ii. 43.

He [Peter] took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankle-bones received strength.—Acts iii. 7.

By the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people.—Acts v. 12.

When Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money.—Acts viii. 18.

He [Peter] gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, presented her alive.—Acts ix. 41.

Fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole, [Paul] said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked.—Acts xiv. 9, 10.

When Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied.—Acts xix. 6.

I thank God I speak with tongues more than you all.—1 Cor. xiv. 18.

There is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the Churches.—2 Cor. xi. 28.

Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works.—2 Cor. xii. 12.

God bearing witness unto them both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will.—Heb. ii. 4.

Apostles in the Non-official Sense of Messengers.

A servant is not greater than his lord, neither *one that is sent* [ἀπόστολος] greater than he that sent him.—JOHN xiii. 16.

Our brethren, they are the messengers [ἀπόστολοι] of the churches, they are the glory of Christ.—2 COR. viii. 23.

I counted it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, and your messenger [ὑμῶν δὲ ἀπόστολον] and minister to my need.—PHIL. ii. 25.

False Apostles.

Such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ.—2 COR. xi. 13.

Thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them which call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false.—REV. ii. 2.

Unclassified Passages.

The apostles, Barnabas and Paul.—ACTS xiv. 4, 14.

Salute Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also have been in Christ before me.—ROM. xvi. 7.

By reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, wherefore, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh.—2 COR. xii. 7.

Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner-stone.—EPH. ii. 20.

And He gave some to be apostles.—EPH. iv. 11.

Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, even Jesus.—HEB. iii. 1.

The walls of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.—REV. xxi. 14.

NATURE OF THE APOSTLESHIP.

On any subject which runs through a large portion of the Bible, it is difficult to produce the evidence in such a degree of completeness, that it will not be open to a controversialist to say with plausibility that something has been omitted, either by mistake or design. Nevertheless, we believe that in the above selection of passages, the reader will find every passage of Scripture essential to enable him to form an intelligent judgment on the apostleship.

The word *apostolos* in its literal sense means *one sent forth —a messenger*, without conveying any idea as to the authority that sends, or the message that is carried (John xiii. 16). It is in this sense applied to the Lord Jesus Himself, "the Apostle of our confession," in reference to His being sent forth from the Father on His mission to save.[1] In a similar manner it is used to designate the deputies chosen and sent forth by the Churches to be Paul's companions in travel, and to bear to him their contribution for the saints; they are "the messengers of the Churches;" they are the "glory of Christ." Epaphroditus, in a similar sense, was "the apostle" of the Philippians, commissioned by them to carry the gift which they sent to Paul (Phil. iv. 18). In the same sense the word is applied to Barnabas and Paul (Acts xiv. 4, 14; 1 Cor. ix. 5, 6), because they were sent forth under direction of the Holy Spirit by the prophets and teachers of Antioch to carry the gospel to the Gentiles. No doubt Paul was then, or soon after, an apostle in a higher sense, but it is only in the non-official and lower sense that it could be applied to Barnabas in common with him. The passage, Rom. xvi. 7, is sometimes quoted as an example of the literal sense of the word; but improperly, for "the apostles" there need refer only to those who were apostles in the highest sense, by whom it appears Andronicus and Junias were well known, and held in high esteem.

In the official sense of the word, ἀπόστολος is applied in the New Testament exclusively to those who were selected and commissioned by the Lord for the special service of spreading the gospel and organizing the Church. Their number from the first was twelve—a number which, although replenished until the object of their appointment was made sure, does not appear to have been ever at any one time exceeded. After the death of Judas, Matthias was put in his place: and after the martyrdom of James, the brother of John (Acts xii.), the number was still kept up by the addition of Paul, who was already converted and in training for the

[1] "Applied to a person," says Bishop Lightfoot, "it denotes more than ἄγγελος. The apostle is not only the messenger, but the delegate of the person who sends him. He is entrusted with a mission, has powers conferred upon him."—*Galatians*, p. 92.

work (Gal. i. 1). The terms in which he speaks of himself —"one born out of due time"—are suggestive of the lateness of his appointment, as if such an act was not to be repeated. Notwithstanding the weakness, dull apprehension, mistakes, and errors exhibited by them in the days of their pupilage, ever after the great Pentecost these men are richly endowed with the Holy Ghost in His supernatural gifts, and take the lead in the affairs of the kingdom. Henceforth they occupy the first rank in the Church (1 Cor. xii. 28); all the other living stones in the temple rest upon them as the foundation, and they rest upon Christ (Eph. ii. 20; 1 Cor. iii. 11).

The apostleship includes all minor Church offices within itself. In discharge of the divine commission with which they were entrusted, they preached Christianity to Jew and Gentile, planted Churches, and guided and governed the Churches which they set up. In doing so, they discharged all the duties which ordinary ministers perform. They preached the gospel (Acts ii., ix. 20, xiii.); they taught (Acts xx. 20; 1 Tim. ii. 7); they prayed (Acts vi. 6, xx. 36); they baptized (1 Cor. i. 14–16); they administered the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. x. 16; Acts xx. 7); they admitted to Church membership, rebuked offenders, and excluded the unworthy (Acts ii. 38–41; 1 Cor. v. 3–5; 1 Tim. i. 20); they laid on hands in appointing men to office (Acts vi. 6); and before deacons were appointed for the special purpose, they served tables (Acts vi. 1, 2). Their ordinary duty, in common with that of every minister of the gospel, was to give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word (Acts vi. 4).

In order to understand what was special to the apostleship, there needs to be left out of account all that they had in common with ordinary Church officers, and to which ordinary Church officers are equal. When this is done it will be found that, over and above all others, they had special qualifications, special functions, and special manifestations which accompanied their ministry.

THEIR SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS.

What distinguished an apostle in respect of qualification from every other minister was the following characteristics:—

1. Each of them was personally chosen by the Lord. That He selected the original twelve during His ministry is universally admitted. In answer to prayer, He showed by the disposing of the lot that it was His will that Matthias should fill the place from which Judas by transgression fell. When Ananias was sent to baptize Saul, the reason assigned by the Lord was, "for he is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts ix. 15). Paul was an apostle "not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father." None of them took the honour upon himself, but waited till the office was conferred directly by the Lord.

2. Each of them had seen Christ after He rose from the dead (Acts i. 22, x. 41, xxii. 13–15; Luke xxiv. 48; 1 Cor. ix. 1, 2). The object of this was, that they might be able from their own personal knowledge to bear witness to His resurrection. But the identification would not have been complete, if they had not been familiar with Christ's presence and person during His life. This is the reason that Peter, in his address preliminary to the selection of Matthias, states—"Of the men therefore which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto the day that He was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of His resurrection." Previous acquaintanceship, therefore, must accompany the sight of Christ after His resurrection from the dead, in order to identification, and to render the testimony complete. Paul's acquaintanceship with Jesus during His earthly ministry is not indeed recorded, but several circumstances induce us to believe it. The youth of Saul of Tarsus was spent at Jerusalem, waiting on the instructions of Gamaliel, the most noted Rabbi of the time; is it likely that a young man of keen intelligence, aware that the Prophet of Nazareth had come to the city, would allow the opportunity to pass without seeing and hearing Him? Then when Jesus appears to him in the way to Damascus, he waits for no identification further than the announcement of the name, and immediately addresses Him as Lord. When at an after day he speaks of the carnal notions that he entertained of the Messiah, during his unconverted life, he

uses a form of expression which he would scarcely have used if he had not seen Him before the crucifixion—"even *though we have known Christ after the flesh*, yet now we know Him so no more" (2 Cor. v. 16). Paul was "one born out of due time;" yet on the occasion of his conversion the Lord specially appeared to him, that he too like the other apostles might be able to say that he had seen the risen Christ.

3. Their commission was universal. The ordinary Church officers discharged their duties in a sphere local and limited, but the commission given to the apostles was to "disciple all nations; preach the gospel to every creature." This implied authority to form their converts into Churches, and to organize and govern the Churches which they formed. They were not tied down to a congregation, or city, or even nation; their sphere of labour was the world.

4. They were all baptized with the Holy Ghost (John xx. 22). Express orders were given that they should not leave Jerusalem until they had received this promise of the Father. The fulfilment of this promise is recorded in Acts ii., and resulted in the bestowment of an abundance of supernatural gifts—more especially the gift of tongues; so much so, that of the great multitude gathered from so many different places, "every man heard them speaking in his own language." No analogous experience is recorded in the case of Paul; yet that he was gifted with the same supernatural endowments is evident from the words which he afterwards used to the Corinthians, "I thank God, I speak with tongues more than you all" (1 Cor. xiv. 18). This abundant supply of the Holy Spirit in His supernatural gifts, was essential to the success of their mission.[1] He strengthened their memories, taught them what they needed to know of the past and of the future, and communicated power.

5. They were the subjects of special revelations. To them

[1] "Those charisms which were possessed by other Christians singly and severally, were collectively given to the apostles, because all were needed for their work. The *gift of miracles* was bestowed upon them in abundant measure, that they might strike terror into the adversaries of the truth, and win by outward wonders the attention of thousands, whose minds were closed by ignorance against the inward and the spiritual. They had the *gift of prophecy* as the very characteristic of their office, for it was their especial commission to reveal the truth of God to man; they were consoled in the midst of

in a special way God communicated the truth which they orally and by writing were to convey to others. The mystery of Christ — "that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus"—was thus revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit (Eph. iii. 3-6). To Peter it was thus revealed that henceforth he "should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts x. 28). Paul was not present at the institution of the Lord's Supper, but at a later date it was expressly revealed to him what he taught the Corinthians on that subject (1 Cor. xi. 23). It was, in fact, the greatness of the revelations with which Paul was favoured that gave occasion to the personal affliction—"the thorn in the flesh," sent with the design of keeping him from being "exalted overmuch" (2 Cor. xii. 7).

In saying that these special qualifications were essential to the due discharge of the apostolic office, it is not meant to convey that no other Christians had any of these qualifications. That idea would not be in accordance with facts. It is in evidence that five hundred brethren at once saw the risen Saviour. Cornelius and his friends, no less than Peter and the apostles, received the Holy Ghost (Acts x. 44). Ananias, and indeed every true prophet, was the subject of a special revelation (Acts ix. 10; 1 Cor. xiv. 26-30). Various public teachers and private Christians possessed one or more of these qualifications; but it was only an apostle who possessed them all, and usually possessed each of them in a higher degree than any one else. But two of these qualifications were special in an eminent degree, and in these no others shared. Every apostle was the subject of the Lord's personal choice, and each of them in virtue of his universal commission had a right to exercise authority over all Christians. The word spoken by any of them was obligatory on all Churches.

their labours by heavenly visions, and rapt in supernatural ecstasies, in which they spake in tongues to God, and not to man. They had the *gift of government*, for that which came upon them daily was the care of all the Churches; the *gift of teaching*, for they must build up their converts in the faith; even the *gift of ministration* was not unneeded by them, nor did they think it beneath them to undertake the humblest offices of a deacon for the good of the Church."—*Conybeare and Howson*, chap. xiii.

THEIR SPECIAL FUNCTIONS.

The qualifications were bestowed on the Twelve that they might be able with more effect to discharge their functions. What were these functions?

1. To bear witness to the resurrection of Christ from the dead. This may be called, in fact, the foundation truth of Christianity. If Christ did not die and rise again, Christianity is a fable; if Christ died and rose again, Christianity is a fact. It was so ordered, not without divine pre-arrangement, that all the apostles had the testimony of their senses to this grand truth. They either saw and heard Him, or they touched and handled Him, or they ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead. Others in after ages might repeat the testimony of the apostles, but the original eye- and ear-witnesses could bear testimony as no others were fit to do (John xx. 27; 1 John i. 1, 2; Acts i. 8, 22, iv. 33; 1 Cor. xv. 8). Other disciples, indeed, who had seen the risen Lord, could also bear witness to the fact; but even from these the apostles stood forth pre-eminently, inasmuch as they alone were the "witnesses chosen before of God" (Acts x. 41).

2. They preached the gospel to the nations, everywhere gathering believers into congregations for worship, teaching them the doctrines and duties of the faith, administering rites, appointing officers, and perfecting the organization of the Christian society so far as it was possible in the circumstances (Mark xvi. 20; Acts xxvi. 16–18; Rom. xv. 19). They put them in a position to exercise the duties of self-government, by bestowing upon the individual Christians spiritual gifts, communicating all necessary advice, and supporting all by their own holy example (Acts vi. 6, viii. 17, xiv. 23, xix. 6; 1 Cor. xi. 34, xiv. 27–33, xvi. 1, 2; 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2; 2 Tim. i. 6, 13, and many other passages).

3. They exercised a spiritual jurisdiction over the congregations which they planted, and one did not scruple to address himself to Churches which another had gathered and instructed. They visited the Churches which they had formed (Acts xv. 36, 41); they felt a weight of responsibility for them (2 Cor. xi. 28); they addressed to them epistles of instruction, or reproof, or comfort, according to circumstances; they legislated

for them by defining doctrine or settling controversies (1 Cor. vii.; Gal. v. 2; 1 Cor. xi.; 2 Thess. iii. 4, 10, 12); and they issued authoritative commands on discipline and other subjects (1 Cor. v.). As the disciples multiplied, and the Church spread over the empire, and their own numbers thinned, their superintendence was only occasional and general; so that in some instances they delegated their own powers to their fellow-labourers to act for a time on their behalf (1 Tim. i. 3; Titus i. 5).

4. They were used of God to communicate inspired instruction to the Church of their time and to all the ages since. They had the mind of Christ. The words that fell from their lips were "traditions," that is, deliverances on religious subjects, that came to the people not as the word of man only, but as the word of God. Committed to writing, their words take rank with the Scriptures, produced by holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. ii. 13, vii. 40; 1 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 25; 2 Pet. i. 21, iii. 15, 16). The apostles produced divine truth, which other men can only repeat and expound, or misinterpret and misapply. They are the inspired teachers of their own time and of all ages. Their one grand aim was the conversion of sinners, the spiritual training of souls, the good of the world, and the glory of God. To this grand work they one and all consecrated their lives.

THEIR SPECIAL SIGNS.

The signs which accompanied the preaching of the apostles more than any other thing arrested the popular attention, struck terror to adversaries, led the people to hearken to the message, and convinced many that the apostles were teachers sent from God. "Many signs and wonders," says the inspired historian, "were done by the apostles." They conferred the gifts of the Holy Ghost with the laying on of hands (Acts viii. 18, xix. 6). They performed miracles almost without number (Acts iii. 7, ix. 41, xiv. 9, 10). The historian, after giving a specimen, sums them up thus: "By the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people;" and the impression thus made upon the populace is

conveyed in the words, "They even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that, as Peter came by, at least his shadow might overshadow some one of them" (Acts v. 12, 15). Similar things are recorded of Paul at Ephesus, for we are told (Acts xix. 11, 12), "God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul; insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out." That God wrought in this miraculous way along with the apostles, and confirmed the truth of the message which they carried, accounts to a large extent for the rapidity with which the gospel spread from city to city and from province to province in the apostolic age. Paul, writing his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, alludes to this when he says, "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders, and mighty works" (2 Cor. xii. 12); and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews in a similar way notes the distinctive marks by which the ministry of the apostles was followed and attested—"God bearing witness unto them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Ghost according to His will" (ii. 4).

It is obvious from the representations of the divine word, that the apostles of Christ stand in a class by themselves. Their office was unique. They stand out in solitary dignity as the chosen companions of the Lord, and the commissioned founders of the Christian Church. When the last survivor of them died, about the close of the first century, he left behind him in the world no man exactly like himself. No man then alive had these special qualifications; no man was invested with, or attempted to exercise, these special powers; no man could confirm his message by these special signs. When the first day of the second century dawned, the work of the apostles and their writings remained, but the office which they filled had vanished like a dream. The Church had no command to continue it; there is no record of its continuation; the attempt at its perpetuation in an inferior class of officers was an afterthought of subsequent ages. Tertullian at the commencement of the third century gave them their true position as the teachers of all time, and spoke of them

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exactly as we would speak of them now, when he used the words,—

"In the Lord's apostles we possess our authority; for even they did not of themselves choose to introduce anything, but faithfully delivered to the nations the doctrine which they had received from Christ. If, therefore, 'even an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel,' he would be called accursed by us."[1]

Happy had it been for Christians if they at all times had acted on this word of truth. Unfortunately they did not. But the words of Tertullian show that one hundred years after the last of them disappeared, their words had an authority in the Church that none others obtained.

[1] *Prescription against Heretics*, chap. vi., in Clark's *Tertullian*, vol. ii. p. 7.

CHAPTER II.—THE PROPHETS.

EVIDENCE OF SCRIPTURE.

Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them.—MATT. vii. 15.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by Thy name, and by Thy name cast out devils, and by Thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you.—MATT. vii. 22.

Behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: some of them shall ye kill and crucify: and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city.—MATT. xxiii. 34.

Many false prophets shall arise, and shall lead many astray.—MATT. xxiv. 11.

There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.—MATT. xxiv. 24.

I will send unto them prophets and apostles; and some of them they shall kill and persecute.—LUKE xi. 49.

This he [Caiaphas] said not of himself; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation.—JOHN xi. 51.

In the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.—ACTS ii. 17.

In these days there came down prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius.—ACTS xi. 27, 28.

There were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. And as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto

I have called them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.—Acts xiii. 1–3.

Judas and Silas, being themselves also prophets, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.—Acts xv. 32.

When Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied.—Acts xix. 6.

The Holy Ghost in every city witnesseth, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.—Acts xx. 23.

The man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.—Acts xxi. 9.

There came down from Judea a certain prophet named Agabus; and coming to us, and taking Paul's girdle, he bound his own feet and hands, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle.—Acts xxi. 10, 11.

Having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of our faith; or ministry [let us give ourselves] to our ministry; or he that teacheth to his teaching.—Rom. xii. 6, 7.[1]

Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman praying or prophesying with her head unveiled, dishonoureth her head; for it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven.—1 Cor. xi. 4, 5.[2]

For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom . . . and to another prophecy.—1 Cor. xii. 10.

God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers. . . . Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers?—1 Cor. xii. 28, 29.

If I have [the gift of] prophecy, and know all mysteries, and all knowledge; and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.—1 Cor. xiii. 2.

Whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away.—1 Cor. xiii. 8.

We know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect shall come, that which is in part shall be done away.—1 Cor. xiii. 9.

Desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.—1 Cor. xiv. 1.

[1] Prophecy is meant here of that which is extraordinary; ministry, of that which is ordinary. Gillespie, *Miscellany*, chap. v.

[2] This is understood to mean man or woman, who in the church joins *as a hearer* in the ordinance of prayer or prophecy; it is not necessarily opposed to the admonition, "Let your women keep silence in the churches." Gillespie, *Miscellany*, chap. v.

He that prophesieth speaketh unto men edification, and comfort, and consolation. . . . He that prophesieth edifieth the church.—1 Cor. xiv. 3, 4.

Now I would have you all speak with tongues, but rather that ye should prophesy: and greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying. But now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either by way of revelation, or of knowledge, or of prophesying, or of teaching? —1 Cor. xiv. 6.[1]

Prophesying is for a sign, not to the unbelieving, but to them that believe.—1 Cor. xiv. 22.

If all prophesy, and there come in one unbelieving or unlearned, he is reproved by all, he is judged by all; the secrets of his heart are made manifest, and so he will fall down on his face and worship God. —1 Cor. xiv. 24.

When ye come together, each one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation.—1 Cor. xiv. 26.[2]

Let the prophets speak by two or three, and let the others discern; but if a revelation be made to another sitting by, let the first keep silence.[3]—1 Cor. xiv. 29, 30.

Ye can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted; and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. —1 Cor. xiv. 31, 32.

It is shameful for a woman to speak in the church.—1 Cor. xiv. 35.

If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord.—1 Cor. xiv. 37.

Wherefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.—1 Cor. xiv. 39.

Ye are . . . of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner-stone.—Eph. ii. 20.

Which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of

[1] "Prophesying proceeds from revelation, doctrine from knowledge in him that teacheth." Gillespie, *Miscellany*, chap. v.

[2] That is, you do not all personally possess the gift; but when you come together, each of you (ἔχει) *holds them*—possesses them for his good and edification. See Gillespie, *Miscellany*, chap. v.

[3] "All things are not always revealed to one; and that which is not revealed to one is oftentimes revealed to more, and sometimes in a clearer manner." *Annotations* in Gillespie's *Miscellany*, chap. v.

men, as it hath now been revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit.—Eph. iii. 5.

He gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints.—Eph. iv. 11.

Despise not prophesyings.—1 Thess. v. 20.

This charge I commit unto thee, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that by them thou mightest war the good warfare.—1 Tim. i. 18.

Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.—1 Tim. iv. 14.

Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and patience, the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord.—Jas. v. 10.

Believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.—1 John iv. 1.

Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets, for God hath judged your judgment on her.—Rev. xviii. 20.

Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book.—Rev. xxii. 7.

Much difference of opinion exists as to whether the prophet was a Church officer, or a gifted person who might be either an officer or simply a Church member. All agree, however, that the prophet, wherever found, is an inspired announcer of the truth, whether the truth that he carries refers to the future or the present or the past. His announcement always presupposes divine revelation and inspiration; but it is the power of prediction that he sometimes exerts, which gives the person who brings with him the divine message the distinctive name of prophet.

False prophets are those who pretend, whether from design or delusion, to the possession of the gift of prophecy which God has not conferred upon them; the result of which is that they announce what is not true. Elymas is an example in one sex (Acts xiii. 6), Jezebel in the other (Rev. ii. 20). Though they announce notions of their own, instead of a divine message, yet the puzzling fact is that on some occasions they are permitted to support their notions by signs and wonders and miracles (Matt. vii. 22, xxiv. 11; Mark

xiii. 22). As the magicians of Egypt confronted Moses with miracles resembling his own, so false prophets may do works so wonderful of their kind as to lead many astray. It is therefore the duty of Christians to put them to the proof, and not allow themselves to be carried away with the false impression that every worker of wonders is a true prophet (Matt. vii. 15, 16, and 1 John iv. 1). They are to be tested by their fruits; that is, by their own personal spirit and conduct, and by the general results which their teaching produces upon their followers. At the same time, it is not impossible that an irreligious man may, like Balaam and Caiaphas, be used as an instrument of expressing a true prediction (John xi. 51).

True prophets were numerous in the New Testament Church; Church teachers, with the gift of occasional inspiration superadded, became prophets, and in virtue of their supernatural gifts took rank next after the apostles; the Church, it is said, being founded on them both (1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. ii. 20). Every true prophet, therefore, admitted the words of the apostles to be commandments of the Lord (1 Cor. xiv. 37).

Although the gift of prophecy is not necessarily an evidence of grace (Matt. vii. 23), it is nevertheless derived from the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 10), and is not in our opinion confined to Church officers, but is often given to Church members in fulfilment of the divine promise (Acts ii. 17, 18; Eph. iv. 11). It is a divine gift that Christians are encouraged to desire earnestly (1 Cor. xiv. 1, 39). It serves as a sign to them that believe, and it convinces them that believe not (1 Cor. xiv. 22–24). Though often exercised in connection with the gift of tongues, the gift of prophecy is more desirable, because it contributes more directly to the edification of the Church (Acts xix. 6; 1 Cor. xiv. 5).

Though the gift was often bestowed upon ordinary teachers and evangelists in the apostolic age (Acts xiii. 1, xv. 32),—men who on other grounds would have more opportunities and be better fitted to turn it to account,—the prophet was not always a Church officer.[1] The name of prophet, by New

[1] Gillespie, who is highly esteemed as a writer on Church government, takes the other side of this question. See *Miscellany*, chap. v.

Testament usage, was given to any person in or out of office, male or female, who was the occasional recipient of divine revelation. He had a recognised position in the Church by divine appointment, but he was not strictly speaking a Church officer. He was not set apart by the laying on of hands. He was simply the possessor of a rare and singular gift, which it was the will of God should be used for the good of others. That gift was not the privilege of every Church member any more than of every Church officer; but it was bestowed on some favoured individuals according as the donor pleased (1 Cor. xii. 10, 29, xiv. 5).[1] Women might possess the gift as well as men (Acts ii. 17, xxi. 9); but in exercising the gift they were expressly forbidden to speak in Church meetings, or to prophesy with uncovered heads (1 Cor. xi. 5, xiv. 34, 35). Men, on the contrary, might use the gift in Church meetings, provided they spoke with uncovered head, and acted under such restraint as not to disturb the good order of the assembly (1 Cor. xi. 4, xiv. 29–31). Even two or three of them might speak at the same Church meeting, but only one at a time. This could easily be managed, for each prophet had his own spirit under his control (1 Cor. xiv. 32).

Though the prophets did occasionally predict (Acts xi. 27, 28, xxi. 10, 11; 1 Tim. iv. 14), their work was not limited to prediction. They were peculiarly fitted for giving public instruction and private admonition, for the Spirit of God communicated to them knowledge, not only of ordinary events, but also of mysteries hidden from the beginning of time (1 Cor. xiii. 2; Eph. iii. 5). Of course there were limitations of this power; even a true prophet did not know everything, but only what God was pleased to reveal; and what was revealed to one might not be revealed to another. But the practical uses to which the gift was applied, were to enable the possessor in proportion to his faith to exhort and edify and comfort the Church (Rom. xii. 6; 1 Cor. xiv. 3, 4, 6; Acts xv. 32); or to reprove and convict the unconverted (1 Cor. xiv. 24); or to point out suitable persons

[1] The prophet "spoke as he was carried away by the power of inspiration suddenly seizing him, an instantaneous elevation of his higher self-consciousness, according to a light that then gleamed upon him." Neander.

for the work of the ministry (1 Tim. i. 18), or to announce future events. However common these inspired announcements might be in that age, Christians must not hold them in contempt (1 Thess. v. 20), but use them for instruction and comfort (1 Cor. xiv. 31).

In addition to the apostles, who possessed the gift of prophecy in no ordinary degree, many others in that age were similarly endowed. In the Churches of Jerusalem and Corinth and Antioch, inspired teachers and other gifted persons were common (Acts xv. 32, xiii. 1, and 1 Cor. xiv.). Those specially named are Agabus (Acts xi. 28, xxi. 10); Judas and Silas (Acts xv. 32); the twelve disciples at Ephesus (Acts xix. 6); and the daughters of Philip. The presence of inspired men in the New Testament Churches did much to supply the need of a trained ministry, and also of the written Scriptures, which it required some time to compose, and to copy, and to put into general circulation.

It was intimated by Paul that the prophetic gift would pass away (1 Cor. xiii. 8). So it did. When the New Testament canon was complete, men were left to ascertain from it the will of God in the ordinary methods. Extraordinary announcements were no longer necessary. Justin Martyr, writing between 130 and 160 A.D., says indeed—"The prophetical gifts remain with us even to the present time."[1] Even if so, they were destined to disappear. They vanish from history. The prophet followed the apostle.

Are such gifts irrecoverably gone? Will apostles and prophets never return to the Church of God? It is not for us to set limits to the grace of God, or to say what God may or may not do under new circumstances and conditions different from ours. But although in the long range of nineteen centuries there have arisen many professing to be apostles or prophets, we can at least say that we have never yet read of one whose credentials we thought satisfactory. Some of them may have done as much as some of the apostles did to preach the gospel to the world and to disciple the nations, but none of them, in the strict and scriptural sense of the word, is either prophet or apostle.

[1] *Dialogue with Trypho*, chap. 82.

CONCLUSIONS.

From the facts now stated, the following inferences may be legitimately drawn:—

1. That many inspired utterances were intended only for the contemporary Church; they were never recorded, and have long since perished.

2. The prophetic gift, being found occasionally in the non-official members of the Church, and being given sometimes to women who were prohibited from speaking in the public assembly, the possessor of it was not necessarily a Church officer.

3. Men possessing the gift, where they were not officials, were allowed occasionally to address the Church with a view to the edification of the members, provided the rules of decency and order were observed.

4. A prophet might be employed in serving Christ in a great variety of forms; like Silas in assisting the apostle to preach to the heathen, like Agabus in warning of approaching danger, like the prophets of Antioch in ordaining missionaries, or like those of Corinth in exhorting the Church.

5. Though some Churches were more favoured than others with the presence of prophets, yet in connection with many no prophet is named. That a considerable proportion, however, of those who held office in the Church had the gift of prophecy, is very probable.

6. The numbers of Church officers and of Church members holding the rank of prophets met the demand for Christian instruction which arose everywhere as the gospel spread, and did much for the training of those already converted and formed into Churches.

7. In course of time, Christian teachers were provided in the natural and ordinary method; the necessity for prophets ceased; and the gift died out possibly with the generation that had received the Holy Ghost, with the laying on of the hands of the apostles.

CHAPTER III.—THE EVANGELISTS.

EVIDENCE OF SCRIPTURE.

And He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ.—Eph. iv. 11, 12.

Entering into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we abode with him.—Acts xxi. 8.

Do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry.—2 Tim. iv. 5.

NATURE OF THE OFFICE.

As the passages given above are the only passages in the New Testament where the word evangelist occurs, our knowledge of the office is rather limited. Philip and Timothy are the only persons named in connection with it, though, judging from similarity of occupation, it must have been filled by others as well. Still our idea of the office must be derived from the history of the two persons, to whom alone the term is applied in the Scriptures. Our inquiry leads us to consider what was the special work of an evangelist; that is, what he did, like the apostles and prophets, outside the sphere of the local congregation.

Philip was one of the seven, originally chosen by the Church at Jerusalem to attend to the service of tables, and usually spoken of as deacons. When the persecution arose about Stephen, the members of that Church were dispersed through Judea and Samaria, and went about preaching the word (Acts vi. 5, viii. 1, 4). Philip went down to Samaria and proclaimed Christ with great success, working miracles and baptizing many. From Samaria, a divine intimation sent him to Gaza, on the way to which he preached Christ to the eunuch, and baptized him. He was afterwards

found at Azotus, the ancient Ashdod of the Philistines; and passing through it, he published the gospel in all the cities till he came to Cæsarea (Acts viii. 12–40). Twenty-six years after, when Paul was returning from his third missionary journey, he abode many days at Philip's house in Cæsarea; there the evangelist had either settled as a pastor, or made that city the centre of his missionary travels. He resided there with his family, and no less than four of his unmarried daughters were endowed with the gift of prophecy (Acts xxi. 8, 9). The word which is used to describe the work of Philip in the cities of Palestine is *εὐαγγελίζω*, from which the term evangelist is derived. It means to *preach* the gospel (viii. 40). From the case of Philip we infer that an evangelist is a travelling preacher, who announces the gospel to persons hitherto in ignorance of it, and not a pastor or minister entrusted with the instruction and superintendence of a settled charge.

Of Timothy more is known, owing to the fact that he was the companion and fellow-labourer of Paul on the second and third missionary journeys, and that he is often named by that apostle in his letters. We must follow his story in chronological order, in order to gather from it the correct idea of an evangelist.

At Lystra, or Iconium, one or other of which was his native town, he joins Paul on the second missionary journey, and becomes his fellow-worker in the gospel (Acts xvi. 3). At Philippi, the first city in Europe where Christianity was planted, as a son served a father, so he served with the apostle in furtherance of the truth (Phil. ii. 22). Thence he goes to Berœa, and afterwards to Athens, from which he is sent back to Thessalonica to establish and comfort the Christians there, who were moved by the afflictions which had fallen upon the apostle (Acts xvii. 14; 1 Thess. iii. 1–3). Some time after he is found preaching at Corinth, and uniting with Paul in the two Epistles addressed from that city to the Thessalonians (2 Cor. i. 19; 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1).

After this Timothy is found at Ephesus ministering to Paul, now out on his third missionary journey; and from that city he and Erastus are sent on to Macedonia, whither it is

the intention of the apostle to follow them (Acts xix. 22). Next, Paul and he are together at Corinth, from which city he sends greetings to the saints at Rome (Rom. xvi. 21). Then he accompanies the apostle on his home journey from Greece to Asia; and, while Luke went with Paul by land, Timothy and others took the sea route and waited for him at Troas (Acts xx. 3–5).

How he was engaged during the two years of Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea is not now known. There is no hint given to the elders of Ephesus that they were at any time to be put under his care (Acts xx. 17–38), nor in the narrative of the voyage to Rome is there any intimation that Timothy was aboard (Acts xxvii.). But when Paul is at Rome, Timothy is there also, for he unites in the Epistles written from prison (Phil. i. 1; Col. i. 1; Philem. 1). In the Epistle sent to the Philippians, the apostle gives expression to the hope that he will soon be able to send Timothy to Philippi, that he may learn something of their condition (Phil. ii. 19). We do not know at what point to fix the imprisonment spoken of in Heb. xiii. 23, and the good confession that he made before many witnesses (1 Tim. vi. 12); and therefore they may as well come in here as anywhere else.

After this we fall back upon the testimony of the two letters specially addressed to himself, the later date of which we here assume. After Paul's first imprisonment closes, he and Timothy are found together in Proconsular Asia. There, however, they parted, the apostle going on to Macedonia, and Timothy at his request remaining some time longer at Ephesus (1 Tim. i. 3). The letters referred to show the duties which at that time he was engaged in performing. He acted there by authority of the apostle. His work was to check false teachers, to appoint Church officers, organize the Church, exhort the elders, preach the gospel, and in everything to show himself an example of diligence and labour. The admonition, "Do the work of an evangelist," reminds him that while he is to labour for the good of those within the Church, his duty to those outside of it is not to be overlooked. After a sojourn at Ephesus, which, considering all the time that the necessities of chronology can allow, could not have been very long, he was instructed to join the apostle (2 Tim. iv. 9), and when

coming he was requested to bring with him the cloke, the books, and parchments which Paul had left behind him at Troas.

There may be some reason to doubt whether the reorganization and supervision of a Church which, after being planted years before, had now fallen into disorder, was a portion of the duties which properly fell to the office of an evangelist, or whether this portion of duty was specially delegated to him by the apostle. We feel inclined to believe that the latter is true in this case. But the facts now stated in detail, which every reader by turning up the passages can verify for himself, show that the labours of Timothy were not limited by locality, and that his work was to plant the gospel in every place where an opportunity offered. Even when left behind at Ephesus with a special commission to reorganize the Church, the duties attaching to his own office were not to be neglected—"Do the work of an evangelist." No minister of a permanent charge could be so migratory in his habits, and so ubiquitous in the sphere of his labours, as Timothy was. He differed from the apostles and prophets in that, so far as we are informed, he did not possess the same extraordinary or higher charisms; he differed from the pastors and presbyters, that he was not tied down to any particular district. He was simply an itinerating minister, whose duty was to preach the gospel to any who knew it not, and to organize a Church in any locality where the material existed and opportunity offered. Having placed the new society under officers of its own, he passed on to other districts and provinces where similar work had to be done. The evangelist of the apostolic age is the missionary, whose work was twofold—the preaching of the gospel, and the organization of Churches. Anything beyond this in the way of supervision, such as that which for a time Timothy performed at Ephesus, was not the work of his own ordinary office, so much as that of one commissioned by the apostle to act on his behalf.

This at once suggests the sense in which the evangelist is a temporary and extraordinary officer. He is not essential to the staff of any organized local Church. He is not needed in any district where Christianity is set up, and the Churches have pastors of their own. But he is needed where people in

any great numbers live outside Christianity, either in actual or practical heathenism. So long as on any part of the earth's surface there are masses of men unevangelized, there is work for the evangelist to do. Till then he is a permanent officer belonging to the Church visible. But so soon as men believe the gospel and are formed into Churches under their own officers, the evangelist passes on to other pagan districts, or settles down as a Christian pastor with a local charge. It is in this sense only that his office is temporary.

The evangelist was employed to a large extent under the eye and with the approval of the apostles. The command to evangelize the world still holds good; and much of it needs to be evangelized. The evangelist is a pioneer, opening up the way for the Church and ministry. We receive unreservedly Hooker's definition—"Evangelists were presbyters of principal sufficiency, whom the apostles sent abroad, and used as agents in ecclesiastical affairs wheresoever they saw need: they whom we find to have been named in Scripture evangelists—Ananias, Apollos, Timothy, and others—were thus employed."[1] The oldest definition of all is that of Victorinus, an African writer of the fourth century: "To relate what Christ has done, and to announce in regard to Christ that He should be worshipped—this is to be an evangelist."[2] This suggests why the word is, and has long been, used in a non-scriptural sense to signify an inspired biographer of Christ. The foundation of the message orally delivered by the evangelist was the historical facts of Christ's life; at a later date the name was applied to the four biographers who had embodied these facts in an inspired narrative. This, however, is an entirely post-apostolic use of the word; it is not found in the New Testament.

CONCLUSIONS.

From the facts now submitted we reach the conclusion:—

1. That the evangelist in the scriptural sense is a man who preaches the gospel to those outside the Church, and who plants and organizes Churches in districts and provinces where they did not previously exist.

[1] *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book V. chap. 78.

[2] Comment on Eph. iv. 12 in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, viii. 1275.

2. His duties mainly are the conversion of sinners and the organization of Churches. When the Churches which he plants are supplied with officers of their own, his work in that locality is at an end.

3. He differs from an apostle in not possessing of necessity any supernatural powers, and from the pastor of a Church in this respect, that he is not a stationary, but migratory officer.

4. The supervision exercised for a brief period by Timothy at Ephesus, and by Titus at Crete, was not an essential of the office, for no trace of it is found in Philip; it was something superadded to the office for a special purpose by delegation of the apostle. It was an exceptional case.

5. The evangelist is a temporary officer, only in the sense that he occupies a district until he has seen the Church permanently provided with officers of its own. But so long as any part of the world is in moral darkness, the evangelist is needed to open up the way for the Church. When every part of the earth is provided with a gospel ministry, he entirely disappears. The moderns call the evangelist a missionary.

6. The evangelist ranks ecclesiastically as a presbyter, that is, the coequal of the bishop or elder, but lower than apostles and prophets. Like the latter, his charge was universal; but, unlike the bishop, he was not tied down to any particular congregation.

7. Not being the officer of any local Church, popular election is no more necessary to his appointment than it is to a prophet or apostle.

8. The account of the matter now given is in full accord with that given by Eusebius the historian, who, speaking of the early part of the second century, uses these words:—

"Most of the disciples of that time, in their ardent love of wisdom, smitten in their soul by the divine word, first fulfilled the command of the Saviour, and fed the poor with their substance. Then leaving their country, they performed the work of evangelists to those who had not as yet heard the word of faith, in their noble ambition to preach Christ, and to deliver the written Gospels. These persons, when they had only laid the foundations of the faith among strangers in certain places there, and had appointed pastors for others, and had committed to them the culture of those who had lately been converted,

themselves again departed to other places and nations by the grace and co-operation of God."[1]

This extract shows that Eusebius, writing in the fourth century, had an accurate idea of the office—in its nature migratory, in its subjects intended for "those who had not yet heard the word of faith," and in its functions twofold—the preaching of the gospel, and the organization of the converts into Churches. The latter was no less essential than the former. Preaching was the divine method for effecting the spiritual conquest of a territory; Church organization was the method for retaining the conquest that had been effected. Without the organization, the impression made by the preaching would have died out in a very short time. The pebble cast into the pool ripples it from the centre to the circumference; but if no further action is taken the agitation subsides, and in a few moments the surface is unruffled as before.

[1] *Eccl. Hist.* iii. 37.

CHAPTER IV.—CHARISMS OR GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT.

EVIDENCE OF SCRIPTURE.

If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.—John iv. 10.

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.—Acts ii. 4.

How hear we every man in our own language, wherein we were born?—Acts ii. 8, 17.

And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.—Acts ii. 38.

Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.—Acts viii. 17.

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.—Acts x. 44–46.

I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end that ye may be established.—Rom. i. 11.

Much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ.—Rom. v. 17.

The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Rom. vi. 23.

The gifts and the calling of God are without repentance.—Rom. xi. 29.

Having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry; or he that teacheth, to his teaching; or he that exhorteth, to his exhorting; he that giveth, let him do it with liberality; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.—Rom. xii. 6–8.

In everything ye were enriched in Him in all utterance and all knowledge; . . . so that ye come behind in no gift.—1 Cor. i. 5–7.

Each man hath his own gift from God, one after this manner, and another after that.—1 Cor. vii. 7.

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal. For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit: to another faith, in the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healing, in the one Spirit; and to another working of miracles; and to another prophecy; and to another discernings of spirits: to another divers kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will.—1 Cor. xii. 4–11.

God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?—1 Cor. xii. 28, 29.

But desire earnestly the greater gifts.—1 Cor. xii. 31.

Whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away.—1 Cor. xiii. 8.

Follow after love; yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.—1 Cor. xiv. 1.

He that speaketh in a tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth; but in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.—1 Cor. xiv. 2.

He that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. Now I would have you all speak with tongues, but rather that ye should prophesy: and greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying. But now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either by way of revelation, or of knowledge, or of prophesying, or of teaching?—1 Cor. xiv. 4–6.

Since ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may abound unto the edifying of the church. Wherefore let him that speaketh in a tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.—1 Cor. xiv. 12–14.

I thank God I speak with tongues more than you all: howbeit in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue. —1 Cor. xiv. 18, 19.

Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to the unbelieving: but prophesying is for a sign, not to the unbelieving, but to them that believe. If therefore the whole church be assembled together, and all speak with tongues, and there come in men unlearned or unbelieving, will they not say that ye are mad?—1 Cor. xiv. 22, 23.

When ye come together, each one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speaketh in a tongue, let it be by two, or at the most three, and that in turn; and let one interpret: but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.—1 Cor. xiv. 26–28.

For the gift bestowed upon us by means of many, thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf.—2 Cor. i. 11.

Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.—2 Cor. ix. 15.

The gospel, whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the working of His power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.—Eph. iii. 7, 8.

But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore He saith, When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.—Eph. iv. 7, 8.

He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man.—Eph. iv. 11–13.

Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.—1 Tim. iv. 14.

For the which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee through the laying on of my hands. —2 Tim. i. 6.

God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will.—Heb. ii. 4.

Touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost.—Heb. vi. 4.

Every good gift and every perfect boon is from above.—Jas. i. 17.

According as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.—1 Pet. iv. 10.

IMPORT OF THE EVIDENCE.

Such is the testimony borne by the Scripture to the subject of charisms. It is quite evident that the apostolic is distinguished from all previous and succeeding ages by the number and variety of its spiritual gifts. However much they may have differed in their nature and object, in the degree of their activity or in the scope of their operation, all are derived from the same heavenly source. They come down from the Father of Lights; they are sent by the risen and ascended Lord. The more important of them are direct results of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost; the gift of the Spirit includes in itself the communication of any of these other gifts, so far as it may please God. Sometimes they consisted in the enlargement of capacities and tendencies already planted from birth, and which henceforth were directed to new objects; at others they were the bestowment of new powers that the subject of them did not possess before. Sometimes the Spirit in the plenitude of His gifts fell upon men as at the Pentecost without any human instrumentality whatever; at others He was given to believers through the intervention of human agency (Acts viii. 17, xix. 6). These gifts are not bestowed upon all alike, nor upon all in the same degree. God distributes them as He pleases, and the degree in which they are possessed is usually according to grace (Rom. xii. 6). Gifts may be abused; or they may be so neglected, that they are entirely withdrawn; or they may be diligently cultivated, strengthened by exercise, and directed to good and noble ends. Every man is responsible for the use which he makes of what God has bestowed; but no man is accountable for what he never possessed.

We divide the gifts peculiar to the apostolic age into three classes—the extraordinary, the official, and the personal; the

first correspond to those which were manifested by the apostles and the prophets, the second are those specially needed by the ordinary ministry, and the third consist of such as are given in a greater or lower degree to all saints. We notice the official and personal only in order to make our view of the subject of charisms complete; for it is the extraordinary gifts only which come strictly under the head of Temporary Agencies.

EXTRAORDINARY GIFTS.

These were peculiar to the apostolic age and temporary in their nature, passing away when the establishment of Christianity and its diffusion over the empire were secured.

1. The very office of the APOSTLESHIP was itself an extraordinary gift; "He gave some to be apostles," 1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11. How much their presence did to spread the gospel over the empire, to confirm the faith of believers, to silence false teachers and check the growth of error, does not need to be told. The presence of inspired men who announced the infallible truth and supported it by miracles, must after their departure have been greatly missed. Calvin and Gillespie both entertain the hope that God from time to time may raise up apostles and prophets and evangelists when they are needed.[1] Athanasius and Augustine, Patrick and Columba, Luther and Calvin, Knox and Melville, all did good work in their time; but the very best of them takes rank immeasurably lower than the apostles of Christ. They made no pretence to possess an apostle's qualifications, to discharge an apostle's functions, or to give proof of apostleship "by signs and wonders and mighty deeds."

2. PROPHECY (Rom. xii. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28, xiv. 1). The peculiarity of this gift in common with that of tongues, is that both were given frequently with the laying on of hands (Acts viii. 17, xix. 6). To persons who possessed the gift, whether through human agency or, as the apostles did, by direct bestowment from above, supernatural revelations were occasionally made, and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit they could use the power for private edification, for

[1] Calvin, *Inst.* iv. 3, 4. Gillespie, *Miscellany Questions*, vii.

the instruction of the congregation, or the general work of the ministry. The prophet used his gift to warn men of danger, to direct them in duty, to quicken the sinner into faith, and to rouse the believer into activity. His words came with power, as being an inspired communication from God.

3. Miracles (Mark xvi. 17, 18; 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28; 2 Cor. xii. 12). Many believers in the early ages were endowed with the power of confirming the divine message by signs and wonders. This gift was possessed by the apostles in a higher degree perhaps than by any others (Acts v. 15, xix. 11, 12). But it was not confined to the apostles. Stephen the deacon and Philip the evangelist both wrought miracles in the power of the Holy Ghost (Acts vi. 8, viii. 6, 7). The exercise of this gift not only relieved much suffering, but contributed greatly to the success of the gospel. The manifestation of the presence of divine power impressed the multitude, intimidated enemies, and secured attention to the truth which the worker of the miracle delivered. This attention often resulted in that reception of the message which is followed by salvation.

4. Healing (Mark xvi. 18; 1 Cor. xii. 9, 28, 30; Jas. v. 15). The immediate removal of physical disease by supernatural agency, without having recourse to medicine or other appliances of skill, is, strictly speaking, only one of the departments in which the miraculous powers of the apostolic age were exercised; but it was so often done, and it receives such prominence in the inspired narrative as to entitle it to be separately mentioned. Examples of it are too numerous to be all quoted; we refer only to Acts iii. 6–8 (xiv. 8–10, xxviii. 8, 9).

5. Divers kinds of Tongues (Mark xvi. 17; Acts ii. 4, 8, 11; 1 Cor. xii. 10, xiii. 8, xiv. *passim*). There cannot be the slightest doubt that this implied the use of languages and dialects which they who spake with tongues had not learned in the ordinary way. What confounded the multitude on the day of Pentecost was, that every man heard these unlearned people "speaking in his own language." The apostles were only Galilæans — inhabitants of a remote country district, and their auditors were denizens of every

country and clime from Rome to Parthia, and from Cyrene to Cappadocia; yet the auditors could ask, "How hear we every man in our own language wherein we were born?" It has indeed been said that they were nearly all Jewish proselytes, and must have understood the Hellenistic dialect; but that is not the question. Whether that was the literal fact cannot now be exactly known, and if they all spoke the one tongue it would only serve as a reason for not bestowing the gift at all. But such a fact never could explain—it would rather mystify why it was that the multitude from so many different regions united in the declaration, "We do hear them speaking *in our tongues* the mighty works of God." The language that they heard the apostles utter was not to the hearers a jargon of unintelligible sounds, for they knew the meaning conveyed; it proclaimed "the mighty works of God." We admit that there is not much told in the subsequent history regarding the practical use to which the gift of tongues was afterwards applied. But if it had no practical use, then in this respect it differed from other charisms, every one of which could be turned to a useful purpose. The very silence of Scripture is instructive; and it is not entirely without significance, that, go where an apostle might, we never find he had any difficulty in making himself understood; that he was as intelligible to those who spoke "in the speech of Lycaonia" as to others who spoke the polished dialect of Athens; and no hint is given that either he or his fellow-labourers had, like our foreign missionaries, first to encounter the arduous task of mastering a strange language before preaching to the heathen. A subordinate use was, that the gift, as a miraculous power, whether the tongues were understood or not by the hearer, was a sign to the unbeliever (1 Cor. xiv. 22), and no doubt led him to reflect on the gospel truth by which it was accompanied. The gift of tongues was often communicated at the same time as that of prophecy (Acts xix. 6); but although a showy gift, it was not so useful as the gift of prophecy; nor, indeed, useful at all, except it was accompanied by interpretation, for purposes of instruction. It was also something, the exercise of which required to be kept in check, and subordinated to the rule of decency and order (1 Cor. xiv. 40).

6. Interpretation of Tongues (1 Cor. xii. 10, 30, xiv. 5, 13, 26–28). It was essential that this gift should be possessed by somebody who was present, else the gift of tongues could not be made edifying to the Church. Sometimes the person who spoke in a strange language could understand and interpret his own words; but sometimes he could not; and then hearers who understood the vernacular only, might indeed regard the manifestation as a "sign," but could not derive spiritual instruction without "interpretation." If this gift of interpretation was not possessed by any present in the Church, then silence was imposed upon the "tongues" (1 Cor. xiv. 16). A man speaking in an unknown tongue, might speak unto a God, or he might edify himself, but unaccompanied by interpretation he could not speak to the profit of the people (1 Cor. xiv. 2–19).

7. Discerning of Spirits (1 Cor. xii. 10, xiv. 29; 1 John iv. 1). This gift was required, not so much for detecting the insincerity of professing Christians, as for discovering false teachers and exposing their opposition to the gospel. Examples of its exercise are presented in Peter's dealing with Ananias and Sapphira, and in Paul's collision with Elymas the sorcerer. Those who possessed the gift could no doubt call it into exercise in such cases as that referred to in 1 John iv. 1; but even ordinary Christians, not possessed of any supernatural power, are bound to act on that admonition, as their means and opportunities enable them.

OFFICIAL GIFTS.

These are mainly the gifts needed to qualify men for office in the Church, and thus to advance the good of the Christian society. Unlike the extraordinary gifts, they do not consist in new powers unpossessed before and bestowed upon individuals for special and temporary objects, but rather in natural powers stimulated to vigour, made more effective, and directed to new ends.

1. Teaching (*διδασκαλία*) and Exhortation (*παρακλήσις*) (Rom. xii. 7; Eph. iv. 11; 1 Cor. xii. 28). The former was the power of communicating truth, and thus enabling believers to attain a clearer conception of it; the latter was

a practical address founded on truth already known, adapted to the circumstances of the hearers, and urging them to put in practice the lessons which a knowledge of it implies. The possession of this power, exercised in an intelligent and acceptable manner, constitutes the aptness to teach (*διδακτικόν*) required in a bishop (1 Tim. iii. 2). This is the charism or gift that Timothy was not to neglect (1 Tim. iv. 14).

2. Government (*κυβερνήσις*) (Rom. xii. 8; 1 Cor. xii. 28). This gift of rule consisted in a general aptitude for directing the Church and for managing ecclesiastical business. It is specially required by apostles, whose care extended to all Churches, but also by every elder in every individual Church, who in the exercise of his office had others under his pastoral care. He was the presbyter, pastor, ruler (*προϊστάμενος*) (1 Tim. iii. 4, 5, v. 17; 1 Thess. v. 12), whose very work was to exercise authority upon others.

3. Ministry or ministration (*διακονία*)—a charism which in itself combined helps (*ἀντιλήμψεις*), giving (*μεταδιδούς*), and showing mercy (*ἐλεῶν*) (Rom. xii. 7, 8; 1 Cor. xii. 28; 1 Pet. iv. 10).

The same individual might, of course, possess one or more of these gifts, but it is interesting to see that the different charisms correspond so closely to the different kind of officers whom God set in the Church. The gift of teaching and exhortation was that specially needed by bishops and pastors; that of government was the appropriate qualification of the elder or presbyter; and the gift of ministry was the suitable charism of the deacon, the very nature of whose work was to minister to the poor, and to perform, on behalf of the needy, acts of service and love.

4. The ordinary ministry, in whom these official gifts are embodied, is itself a gift of God. The same God who set in his Church apostles and prophets hath also set in it pastors and teachers, helps and governments (1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11). Though pastors, elders, and deacons are ordinary officials, they are no less the gift of God.

ORDINARY GIFTS.

Under this head we include such ordinary charisms as in any age of the Church God bestows upon individual Chris-

tians, whether in office or out of it, for their spiritual good and salvation.

1. Faith (1 Cor. xii. 9). That common faith which brings every believer into union with the Lord is itself a gift, and a very precious gift, of the Spirit of God (Gal. iii. 26, v. 22; Eph. ii. 8). But it is questioned whether the charism of 1 Cor. xii. 8 is the common grace of faith; if so, it is possibly this faith in a more than common degree—the strong faith which can "move mountains."

2. Knowledge (γνῶσις) (1 Cor. xii. 8). This charism is a theoretical and intimate acquaintance with revealed truth. Spiritual discernment given by the Holy Spirit enables a man to apprehend divine facts in their relations, and the sum of this apprehension deposited in the mind constitutes what is called knowledge (1 Cor. i. 5–7). The "word of knowledge" is the fit expression of this truth.

3. The Word of Wisdom (λόγος σοφίας) (1 Cor. xii. 8). Wisdom is simply knowledge turned to right practical ends. It is closely connected with the judgment or good sense, which constitutes the substratum of all gifts, and for the absence of which no other intellectual endowment can compensate. It is the faculty which, quickened and purified by the Holy Spirit, enables a believer to apply divine truth in a practical way to the various circumstances of life. "The word" of wisdom is simply the expression of this wisdom in words.

4. Righteousness (Rom. v. 15–17). This righteousness of God, consisting in the complete and perfect obedience of Christ, is made over to the believer as a free gift, and constitutes the ground of his justification and life.

5. Eternal Life (Rom. vi. 23). This is the consummation and result of redemption. Gifts of this nature bestowed upon a sinner are never recalled. There is no repentance in the sense of change of purpose with Him (Rom. xi. 29; Jas. i. 17).

The apostle, in 1 Cor. xiii. 8, hinted that the gifts would be done away. So far as the supernatural charisms are concerned, his anticipations are realized. These agencies, given at the origin of Christianity for the purpose of its more rapid diffusion and establishment, were only temporary

in their duration, and have vanished long ago. The proof that they have done so is, that now they are not to be found. Whether they will ever be restored, is a matter in regard to which no evidence exists, and on which at present it is impossible to pronounce. But the official gifts which qualify men for active service, or men who themselves serve the Church, and also the ordinary gifts, such as adorn the character and crown the life of individual Christians, still remain. Where they have not been granted, it is difficult to acquire them; but where they exist already, they can be increased, in answer to prayer, by exercise, and in the use of the ordinary means. However liberal the Holy Spirit may be in the distribution of His own gifts, it is not to be expected that under ordinary circumstances they are given to all the members of a congregation, or that any individual, however highly favoured, possesses them all (1 Cor. xii. 30). He retains in His own hand the right of withholding or bestowing His own gifts, and He divideth "to each one severally even as he will" (1 Cor. xii. 11). The greater and better gifts are objects that Christians should desire (1 Cor. xii. 31, xiv. 1, 12–14). Usually every man, especially every Christian, has some gift of his own, either dormant, or called into exercise or roused into activity (1 Cor. vii. 7). Every gift ought to be employed in a manner appropriate to itself and for the profit of the Church (Rom. xii. 6–8; 2 Tim. i. 6; 1 Tim. iv. 14; 1 Pet. iv. 10). Persons are responsible for every talent entrusted to them, and spiritual gifts are talents which the possessor is bound to use for the advantage of others (Matt. xxv. 14, 30; 1 Cor. xii. 4–11, xiv. 4–6). They were given for the purpose that believers themselves might be established (Rom. i. 11), and the possession of them is a means of usefulness and a ground of thankfulness to others, especially when given in answer to their prayers.

BOOK II.

DIVINE AND PERMANENT ELEMENTS.

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We now pass on from the extraordinary agencies which as a matter of fact soon vanished away, to inquire into those divine facts and principles which entered into the ordinary constitution of the Christian society, and received the approval of the apostles. We make no attempt to arrange them in the order of their importance, for that might be difficult to determine. Our method is to begin with the clear and simple, and gradually to rise up to the more difficult and complex.

CHAPTER I.—THE CHURCH OR LOCAL CONGREGATION.[1]

EVIDENCE OF SCRIPTURE.

And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican.—MATT. xviii. 17.

Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.—MATT. xviii. 20.

When they were come in, they went up into the upper chamber where they were abiding; both Peter and John and James. . . . These all with one accord continued stedfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren. And in these days Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren, and said (and there was a multitude of persons gathered together, about a hundred and twenty).—ACTS i. 13–15.

When the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place.—ACTS ii. 1.

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.—ACTS ii. 4.

They then that received his word were baptized; and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.—ACTS ii. 41, 42.

And the Lord added to them, day by day, those that were being saved.—ACTS ii. 47.

Many of them that heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.—ACTS iv. 4.

The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul.—ACTS iv. 32.

Great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things.—ACTS v. 11.

[1] Most of what is said in this chapter on "the Local Church," and in a subsequent chapter on "the Deacon," has already appeared in two articles written by me in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* for January and July 1886.

The twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said.—Acts vi. 2.

There arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem.—Acts viii. 1.

Saul laid waste the Church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.—Acts viii. 3.

The report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem.—Acts xi. 22.

Even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people.—Acts xi. 26.

About that time Herod the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the church.—Acts xii. 1.

Prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him.—Acts xii. 5.

There were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers.—Acts xiii. 1.

When they had appointed for them elders in every church.—Acts xiv. 23.

When they were come and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all things God had done with them.—Acts xiv. 27.

When they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church and the apostles and elders.—Acts xv. 4.

It seemed good to the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to choose men out of their company.—Acts xv. 22.

When he had landed at Cæsarea, he went up and saluted the church, and went down to Antioch.—Acts xviii. 22.

Upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them.—Acts xx. 7.

Feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood.—Acts xx. 28.

Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.—1 Cor. i. 2.

Who shall put you in remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church.—1 Cor. iv. 17.

If any man seemeth to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.—1 Cor. xi. 16.

When ye come together in the church, I hear that divisions exist among you.—1 Cor. xi. 18.

He that prophesieth edifieth the church.—1 Cor. xiv. 4.

If therefore the whole church be assembled together, and all speak with tongues.—1 Cor. xiv. 23.

First they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us by the will of God.—2 Cor. viii. 5.

Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father.—1 THESS. i. 1.

Exhort one another, and build each other up, even as also ye do.—1 THESS. v. 11.

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is.—HEB. x. 25.

Neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and them that would he forbiddeth, and casteth them out of the church.—3 JOHN 10.

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

In classical writers the word ἐκκλησία simply means *a congregation* or *public assembly* of people convened for any purpose whatever. By the New Testament writers it is usually applied to the Christian congregation in the habit of meeting for worship; and when so applied, it is uniformly translated by the English word *Church*. But the objects for which people meet in an *ecclesia* are not to be learned from that word. The character of the persons who assemble, the authority under which they convene, the purpose for which they come together, and the duties, rights, and privileges which belong to them, cannot be ascertained either from the original Greek word, which simply denotes the congregation, nor from the associations which gather round its modern English equivalent, but from the facts and circumstances of the case as presented in the New Testament.

Though the people of God exist in the world from the Fall, the Christian Church, as a separate and organized society, dates only from the Pentecost, recorded in the second chapter of the Acts. From that day it stood forth a body distinct from Judaism, with officers, doctrines, rites, characteristics, and a mission of its own. Henceforth it went forward to discharge its peculiar functions, to complete its organization, to increase its membership, to act upon the world outside. The hundred and twenty persons who met in the upper room, including the apostles, were the nucleus of the new organization. On that memorable day no less than three thousand received the word, and were baptized; and it is recorded of them, that "they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and the prayers."

To these, others were added under similar conditions. All these in their collective capacity constituted the *ecclesia* or congregation at Jerusalem—the mother-Church of Christendom.

Taking for our guidance what is here told us of the first Christian society, and bringing together a variety of hints found in other parts of the New Testament, as submitted in the evidence at the head of this chapter, we find that the following elements enter into the constitution of the local Church:—

1. It consists of people gathered out of the world lying around; that is, it consists of men and women who profess to receive the gospel message, and who, with their households, are admitted by baptism. They are spoken of as the called, the elect, the faithful, the saints, the brethren.

2. These persons meet statedly in one place and constitute the one *congregation*. It is this fact that makes *ecclesia* their appropriate designation.

3. The object of their meeting is to worship God, to observe the ordinances which Christ has appointed, to promote their own spiritual good, and to advance the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom.

4. They are united by the ties of a common faith, binding them first to Christ and then to each other; and this common faith results in a public profession, expressed by the observance of two ordinances, Baptism and the Lord's Supper—the former the token of entrance into the Christian community, the latter of brotherhood therein.

5. They meet as a Church under divine authority, with the sanction of Christ and in subjection to His revealed will, to do all and everything essential to that which God warrants them to do, and nothing more. Without subjecting itself to this authority, a meeting of Christians would not be a Church in the sense that the term is usually applied in the New Testament; it would only be a gathering, a mere voluntary association. Such an association might indeed exist, and be called a Church or congregation; it might rest on the basis of compact; it might make its own laws and alter them at pleasure; and when it thinks right, it might dissolve and cease to exist. But a Church in the New Testament sense is

an organized society, meeting under the direction of the Lord, by whose authority it has been called into existence. It exists in virtue of a divine commission, and for definite objects. It cannot therefore act exactly as it pleases. It must pay strict regard to its commission, and to the powers granted therein.[1]

The evidence submitted from Scripture warrants us to form the conception of the Church that is thus presented. The model put before us in the Scriptures entitles us to say,—

That all who believe the gospel and reside within convenient distance of each other, should enrol themselves in a religious society under the authority of Christ, and should meet statedly in one place for the worship of God, for the observance of Christian ordinances, and for mutual edification.[2]

It is a fact divinely revealed that the first Christians in the various districts and cities where they lived, met statedly in one place for the objects thus described. They did so by the direction of Christ's apostles. The Church or local congregation is therefore a divine institution, not a voluntary society, in the sense of a human construction, whose principles and methods and objects men prescribe and alter at their pleasure; and not a creature of the State, for those who aided at its birth acted without the leave of Herod, or Pontius Pilate, or Tiberius Cæsar. The Church is a divine institution, deriving its existence from the will and authority of God, and formed by the Christians of a locality associating and acting together. Under these circumstances it is the duty of every Christian to seek admission to the fellowship of the Church, provided that circumstances do not make it impossible, or at least very inconvenient, for him to associate; while it is no less the duty of all members to attend regularly upon its various meetings.[3]

[1] Dr. M'Crie takes the same view: "The Christian Church is not an arbitrary institution of men—not a mere voluntary association of any number of people, for any purpose, and on any terms, which to them may seem good; nor has its communion been left vague and undetermined by the laws of its founder." *On the Unity of the Church*, p. 79.

[2] Baxter's definition of a Church is—"A particular Church which the Holy Ghost did institute was one society of Christians, united under one or more bishops for personal communion, public worship, and holy living." *On Episcopacy*, part II. chap. 2.

[3] "Every Christian," says Stillingfleet, "is under an obligation to join in Christian society with others; because it is his duty to profess himself a Chris-

Non-attendance at the meeting is an ancient form of moral delinquency; but Christians are not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, as "the custom of some is."

ADVANTAGES OF THE CHURCH MEETING.

Reflection and experience alike confirm the advantages of the stated Church meeting:—

1. If individuals were left to cultivate devotional feeling alone, and not in fellowship with others of similar sympathies and tastes, the very holiest impressions would gradually fade away. Good impressions need to be constantly renewed. The Church meeting brings the individual in pursuit of a spiritual object into communion with other individuals of kindred tastes and desires; they all stir up and encourage each other; and in this way pious feeling and active service are alike promoted. The divine institution requires the presence of the Christian people of the locality in the same congregation at least one day in every seven, and supplies, or tries to supply, on these occasions the impulse which cold and sluggish humanity needs. Its manifest design is to keep piety alive where it already exists, and to call the attention of others not pious to a subject of supreme importance which, in the case of many, the cares and pleasures of the world often keep out of sight. Even if Christians mix much with the world, they can scarcely escape adopting the world's sentiments and following the world's ways. To avoid a course so fatal, people are aided by the Church, in which they are not only warned of the danger, but thrown into the acquaintanceship of persons who have spiritual sympathies and tendencies similar to their own. The amount of advantage derivable from this source depends much on the spirituality and intelligence of those who compose the Church, and upon our own capability and desire to profit by their fellowship. It speaks well for any individual when he loves the company and friendship of good men; it is the very reverse when he turns away from the footsteps of the flock, shuns companionship with the good, and forms friendship with the worldly and the gay. A devout and

tian, and to own his religion publicly, and to partake of the ordinances and sacraments of the gospel." *Irenicum*, p. 109.

tender spirit, if for a time deprived by circumstances from uniting in public worship with other servants of God, feels that he has lost one main source of his enjoyment. The 84th Psalm gives strong and beautiful expression to the longings of such a soul, shut out temporarily from communion with God and His people in the sanctuary: "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord;" for "a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand."

2. Few Christians are so far advanced in religious knowledge that they derive no spiritual benefit from coming into contact with other minds. Paul could say what most of us are not justified in saying—"They who were of repute imparted nothing to me." The mind most richly endowed with spiritual truth has usually something still to learn. As a matter of fact, none are the worse for instruction, and some need to be taught over again the first principles of the oracles of God. But those who need the gospel cannot have it preached to them individually, except at a vast expense of time, and strength, and means. Though the Christian teacher is bound to be "instant" at all seasons, he can with more ease, and usually with more effect, preach to a whole congregation than to each individual by himself. The great moral lesson of baptism—that purity is essential to the better life—is something that all need to have set before them, alike by precept and symbol, and this can best be done in the public assembly. If the eucharist exhibits by an outward and visible sign the communion of saints with each other, no less than the communion of them all with God, this end can be secured only when Christians "assemble themselves together" in the public congregation. The Church meeting affords Church members the opportunity of receiving instruction in divine things, under circumstances the most impressive and solemn. It gives to all who come the privilege of hearing, and "faith comes by hearing." Christ says: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

3. If education in divine things is to be carried forward, and religious impression sustained, the Church is to meet statedly and frequently, and it is the duty of the people to attend its meetings diligently. It is the command of the Lord

that they are to do so. They are not to disobey His command merely because they think that they can profit more by staying away. It is a question, not of our pleasure, or of what we think most edifying, but of obedience to our Lord. In some instances it may be quite true that an intelligent man can receive more spiritual good by a wise expenditure of Sabbath time in a course of private reading and meditation than by waiting on the ministrations of the public congregation. It is possible that on a given day a man might not be so much edified by hearing a feeble discourse in church as by reading Guthrie or Spurgeon at home. But the question is not whether any particular day can be spent more profitably at home or in church. The real question, which every person has to decide upon his own responsibility, is this: "Is not the Church meeting an institution intended by its Divine Author for the good of man? Is it not the divine will that my household and myself should gather to such meeting and take advantage of its ministrations?" Nor is the question what is best for the individual in certain exceptional circumstances, but what is best for the good of all. Of that it may be allowed that God, who has set up the institution among men, is the best judge. If goodwill to men is permitted to operate as a motive in human action, a Christian will not only inquire as to what God would have him do, but must consider the certain issue if every other were to act in similar fashion, and to prefer on every first day of the week home studies to public worship. The result would be the dissolution of the Church, and along with it the destruction of the most powerful agency ever constructed for the moral improvement of men. The Oriental sage, the Greek philosopher, the Roman conqueror, never created or devised an arrangement in virtue of which the rich and poor, the learned and ignorant of every Christian land and tribe meet together once every seven days, century after century, to receive instruction in the highest moral and spiritual subjects. An institution divine in its origin, constructed for the good of mankind, set up in the world for nineteen centuries, and operating at this day universally in all civilised nations, and always with efficiency according as it is energetically wrought, ought not to be lightly broken up. On the contrary, in the interests of the human

race, it is the duty of Christians to strive to make it, more than it has ever been, an agency for good; and each individual in his own place should regard it a matter of principle never to be absent, except at the call of some higher duty or of necessity, from the meeting of the congregation. Attendance at Church worship does not prevent any person so disposed from undertaking on other days, and on other hours of the Lord's day, as much private reading and meditation as may be good for him. But for everything there is a time.

4. There is wisdom in the arrangement that people professing to be saints, and residing in the same neighbourhood, shall meet together statedly in the same worshipping assembly. Neighbours are most likely to know each other, and by meeting together in church once a week or more, they extend and confirm their knowledge. Their mutual acquaintanceship enables them, if so disposed, to discharge their relative duties more efficiently. Church officers can perform duties to those who live near, and whom they are constantly meeting, and so can Church members to those who "are over them," better than either could do if thrown wide apart by rank and distance.

5. Every Church besides, in proportion to its efficiency, is a centre from which a stream of good influences flows forth to all the district around. Even when it fails to do much to save men, it always moralizes them, and makes them better members of the community than they would be otherwise. The Church meeting exercises a refining and elevating influence upon men, even where it does not succeed in pervading them with any deep knowledge of gospel truth, or in persuading them to act on the higher lines of Christian morality. Origen (185–253), contrasting the rulers of the Churches with the pagan magistrates of his day, has the following passage, showing the effect that the Church institution exercises over its membership:—

"For the Church [ecclesia] of God which is at Athens is a meek and stable body, as being one which desires to please God, who is over all things; whereas the assembly [ecclesia] of the Athenians is given to sedition, and is not at all to be compared to the Church of God in that city. And you may

say the same thing of the Church of God at Corinth, and of the assembly of the Corinthian people; and also of the Church of God at Alexandria, and of the assembly of the people of Alexandria. And if he who hears this be a candid man, and one who investigates things with a desire to ascertain the truth, he will be filled with the admiration of him who not only conceived the design, but also was able to secure in all places the establishment of Churches of God alongside of the assemblies of the people in each city."[1]

6. Men combined in societies can exert a greater amount of influence on the outside world than any individual acting alone. Let us imagine what must happen if every Christian should persistently decline to enter into Church relations with his fellow-Christians, and insist on living by himself in spiritual isolation. In that case the ordinances which Christ has appointed for the nurture of the Church—the preaching of the word, public worship, the administration of the Lord's Supper—could not be observed, or if observed, would lose much of their effect; the religious instruction of the community could not be advanced, ministers could not be maintained, missionaries could not be supported in pagan lands, and every agency for the good of mankind would receive a stunning blow. Except Christians unite together in the local congregation according to divine appointment, they cannot provide for themselves a gospel ministry, nor secure the regular and effective preaching of the word, nor support charities at home, nor supply necessary encouragement to evangelists in carrying the gospel message to the ignorant and unbelieving. If association of individuals in Churches were at an end, there would be no power behind current religious movements to sustain voluntary societies, and to keep individual agents at work. Disintegration in such a case would impose upon the onward march of Christianity a sudden check, and true religion, except kept alive by supernatural means, would flicker and die out in a few generations.

If great evils are thus put under restraint, and much good accomplished by the association of individual Christians in the Church, we see the reason why the apostles, in obedience to the command of the Lord, went forth to preach the gospel,

[1] *Against Celsus*, vii. 30.

and why, in every city where their message was received, they gathered their disciples into a congregation. Where the gospel made converts, a Church was organized to be a centre of influence and a fountain of blessing to the place. Preaching the truth was the means of conquering territory for Christ; organization was the means by which the territory conquered was held in possession. Ever since, the local congregation has been a powerful force in sustaining and diffusing the Christian faith.

PRINCIPLE OF ASSOCIATION.

It is obvious that the principle of *association* lies at the basis of the *Church* institution.[1] Individual Christians residing within reasonable distance associate to form a Church for spiritual and moral ends. But if individual Churches find that moral and spiritual ends can be better advanced together than apart, there is no sufficient reason why they should not act together rather than separately; and if Church rulers find that by meeting and acting together they can carry out more effectively the purpose for which they have been set over the flock, there is nothing to forbid, but everything to encourage, a judicious development of that principle. Association of congregations produces provincial and national Churches: and association of Church rulers leads up to synods and councils. These institutions all proceed on these two principles:—*first*, that it is lawful for individuals to associate together in any convenient number for wise and good ends; and, *secondly*, that every local Church is a single part of the great Christian community, separated from the other parts only by the conditions of space and time.

[1] Dr. Thornwell says: "The truth of the principle is the foundation of the law. The principle, therefore, necessarily contains the rule, and the rule just as necessarily supposes the principle. . . . The principle states the general truth out of which the rules of conduct or particular duties arise, and therefore obviously includes them." *Works*, vol. iv. p. 184.

CHAPTER II.—THE MINISTRY.[1]

EVIDENCE OF SCRIPTURE.

I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.—Isa. lx. 17.

Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God.—Isa. lxi. 6.

I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day nor night.—Isa. lxii. 6.

I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.—Jer. iii. 15.

Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall set over his household to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.—Luke xii. 42, 43.

He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me.—John xiii. 20.

Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.—Acts vi. 3.

Even for a whole year, they [Barnabas and Saul] were gathered together with the church, and taught much people.—Acts xi. 26.

There were at Antioch in the church that was there prophets and teachers . . . and as they ministered to the Lord and fasted.—Acts xiii. 1, 2.

When they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.—Acts xiv. 23.

Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood.—Acts xx. 28.

How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?—Rom. x. 14.

[1] Most of what is said in this chapter on the "Ministry," and elsewhere on the "Apostleship," has already appeared in two articles written by me in the *Presbyterian Review* for January 1886 and April 1887.

What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord gave to him. — 1 Cor. iii. 5.

For we are God's fellow-workers: ye are God's husbandry, God's building.—1 Cor. iii. 9.

Even so did the Lord ordain that they which proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel.—1 Cor. ix. 14.

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.—1 Cor. xii. 12.

Now ye are the members of Christ, and severally members thereof. —1 Cor. xii. 27.

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers?—1 Cor. xii. 28.

Let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak.—1 Cor. xiv. 34.

Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in the whole of Achaia.—2 Cor. i. 1.

Seeing we have this ministry [διακονίαν], even as we obtained mercy, we faint not.—2 Cor. iv. 1.

We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.—2 Cor. iv. 5.

Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.—Gal. vi. 6.

He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering [εἰς ἔργον διακονίας], unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man.—Eph. iv. 11–13.

To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.—Phil. i. 1.

Epaphras our beloved fellow-servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ [διάκονος τοῦ Χριστοῦ] on our behalf, who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.—Col. i. 7.

Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry [διακονίαν] which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.—Col. iv. 17.

We beseech you, brethren, to know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake.—1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus, when I was going unto Macedonia, that thou mightest charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine.—1 Tim. i. 3.

Faithful is the saying, If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. The bishop therefore must be without reproach.—1 Tim. iii. 1, 2.

Deacons in like manner must be grave . . . for they that have served [διακονήσαντες] well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing.—1 Tim. iii. 8, 13.

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and in teaching.—1 Tim. v. 17.

The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.—2 Tim. ii. 2.

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city.—Titus i. 5.

They shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them.—Heb. viii. 11.

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account.—Heb. xiii. 17.

Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.—Jas. v. 14.

As each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards.—1 Pet. iv. 10.

If any man ministereth [διακονεῖ], ministering as of the strength which God supplieth.—1 Pet. iv. 11.

The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder . . . tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight.—1 Pet. v. 1, 2, 4.

To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: . . .—Rev. ii. 1.

DIVINE PROVISION FOR EDIFYING THE CHURCH.

The men and women who compose the local Church are saints by outward profession, and are always spoken of by names which indicate what they either are or ought to be. They are the "called," the "elect," the "disciples," the "brethren," the "saints." Whether they all are so in

reality, God who searcheth the heart alone can be assured; but while they remain in Church communion they profess to be the people of God, and in the New Testament are accepted and treated as such. Their meeting as a Church every Lord's day for public worship, and their sitting at the Lord's table, can have no other meaning than that they profess personal faith in Christ, own His authority, aim at a life of holiness, and cherish the hope of eternal life. Meeting statedly as they do in the congregation for mutual edification in spiritual things, we are now to inquire whether any special provision has been made to aid them in the object which they hope to attain, or whether they are left in matters of highest importance to edify each other as best they can.

The Church at Jerusalem was organized under the eye of all the apostles, before they went forth to the nations on their great mission. In that congregation they appointed seven men to serve tables and to attend to the interests of the widows in the daily ministration (Acts vi.). Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in the newly-formed Churches of Lycaonia (Acts xiv. 23). In the Church at Antioch we find teachers as well as prophets (Acts xiii. 1); and in the Church at Philippi there were bishops and deacons (Phil. i. 1). The Thessalonian Christians had persons who "laboured" among them, and "were over them in the Lord" (1 Thess. v. 12); and the Hebrew saints also possessed certain officials who "ruled over them," and "watched for their souls" (Heb. xiii. 17). No Church of that time was allowed to remain for any length of time without such officers, and till they were supplied there was something "wanting" (Titus i. 5). The officers thus appointed were the *ministry*, that is, persons appointed to minister or serve God and the Church in the discharge of the various duties prescribed to them in the New Testament. Three questions of great interest have been asked in regard to the ordinary official members,—Did they form a distinct class? Were they established by divine authority? Was the office that they filled intended to be permanent? These questions are worthy of being answered in detail.

THE MINISTRY A DISTINCT CLASS.

That those who held office in the Church were distinct from the ordinary members seems manifest enough. The proof of it is the following facts:—

1. They were distinguished by special names; they were called pastors, teachers, elders, bishops, ministers, deacons, stewards, labourers. Had there been no distinction in duty between them and ordinary Church members, there would have been no necessity for a difference of name.

2. These men were set apart to their work with the laying on of hands, of which various examples are on record in the New Testament (Acts vi. 6, xiii. 3; 1 Tim. iv. 14). Church members who filled no office did not need to submit to this ceremony, except when receiving some spiritual gift, or in being the subjects of a miraculous cure.

3. They had special duties to perform. It was theirs to preach and teach, to feed the flock, to baptize, to serve tables, to pray with the sick, to check the growth of error, to organize and rule the Church, to set apart other Church officers, to propagate the truth, and to do their utmost to promote the spiritual interests of the people. If these duties had been common to all the members, they would not have devolved in a special manner on the Church officers.

4. There were many of these duties which the larger portion of Church members were positively forbidden to undertake. To speak in the church is essential to the most important of them, and this is something that one of the sexes was distinctly interdicted from doing. "Let the women keep silence in the churches." What one half of the congregation was positively forbidden to do, could not have been the duty of all.

5. A portion of those in office, on whom the most laborious duties fell, were remunerated for their labour. He who was taught was to communicate to him that taught in all good things. The elder who ruled well, and in addition to ruling laboured in word and doctrine, was worthy of double "honour" —an honour that includes remuneration, as the next verse shows. It was the ordinance of the Lord, that they who proclaim the gospel are to live by it. This could not possibly

be the case if every male member of the Church is to serve as preacher and teacher and elder.

6. The very expressions by which they are described—teacher and taught, rulers and ruled, pastor and flock—imply the distinction in the strongest manner. We cannot possibly suppose that the taught were the teachers, or that the ruled were the rulers, or that the flock were the pastors; God is not the author of confusion. The contrast in the designations marks the distinction to which we call attention.

7. There were special duties that the people were bound to discharge to those who were "over them in the Lord." They were commanded to know them, to honour them, to obey them, to remember their conversation and faith, and to esteem them in love for their work's sake. These are duties which the members of the Church are to perform to their teachers; it is obvious, therefore, that teachers and members are not identical, for it would be absurd to tell the members to do such things in respect of themselves.

From these considerations nothing can be more certain than that Church officers occupied a position in regard to Church work entirely different from that of those whom they were set to instruct and to guide.

THE MINISTRY A DIVINE INSTITUTION.

That these officers were originally placed in the Church by divine authority, we infer from the following facts:—

1. There was a promise in the Old Testament prophecies that such a class of men would be set up in gospel times—"I will give you shepherds according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." The shepherd who feeds the flock with knowledge is the gift of God. That being so, he is not the institution of man.

2. The apostles, acting under the commission of Christ and, of course, by His authority, were the first to appoint men to fill such offices in the Churches. They appointed "the seven" at Jerusalem; they appointed "elders" in the Churches of Lycaonia; they stated the qualifications of bishops and deacons (1 Tim. iii. 13); and defined the duties which all were to perform (1 Pet. v. 1–4). Can there be the slightest

doubt that what was done by an apostle in the Church was done by the authority of Christ?

3. Scripture directly affirms that the institution of the ministry is divine. "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments" (1 Cor. xii. 28). This is not an enumeration of offices, but of gifts. Let it be remembered, however, as has been already seen, that pastors and teachers, helps and governments, are divine gifts as well as apostles and prophets; the one is from God no less than the other. The same testimony is borne in Eph. iv. 11—"He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." Here again the apostle and prophet and evangelist are from God, but so also are the pastors and teachers; the ordinary as well as the extraordinary ministry are from God. Could any more satisfactory evidence be desired of the divine institution, than that the ministry are given by God, and that God has placed them in the Church?

4. In 1 Tim. iii. 1–13 the qualifications of bishop and deacon are minutely described, and in 1 Pet. v. 1–4 elders are exhorted to the discharge of their duties and promised a reward—"When the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away." It is not very likely that God would promise to reward the labour of men who fill an office that He has not instituted and approved.

On these grounds we conclude that the ordinance of the ministry, meaning thereby all the offices sanctioned by the apostles and set up in the Church in the apostolic age, is of divine institution.

THE MINISTRY A PERMANENT INSTITUTION.

It would be strange enough if an organization, generally established and set up with so much care by the apostles, should have no authority for its continuance after the close of the first century. This, however, is not the case. The Christian ministry is a permanent institution. We believe this to be the case for the reasons following:—

1. Christ in the apostolic commission set a great work before the ministry—to disciple, to baptize, and instruct all nations. When the apostles died, that work was only begun. To-day it is not finished. The necessity for evangelists and teachers is as great as ever; perhaps, indeed, more so, now that extraordinary agents and supernatural gifts are withdrawn.

2. We infer permanence for the offices from the fact that the qualifications and duties belonging to them are so minutely described (Acts xx. 28; 1 Tim. iii. 1–13; 1 Pet. v. 1–4). Would these minute and repeated regulations have been recorded, in the word that "abideth for ever," if it was the will of God that the offices should die with the men who then filled them, and if the divine sanction was to be withdrawn from them at the close of that generation?

3. The ministry are as essential to the Church as officers are to the army. An army without officers is not likely to win many victories or to fight many battles. A society without rulers, and which doggedly declines to be ruled, has in it the elements of dissolution. A Church without men possessing the authority of office is an unorganized crowd of people professing religion,—a society of Christians possessed of none with power to command, and none under obligation to obey,—a mixed multitude, outside Egypt it may be, utterly unfit to fight the battles of the Lord.

4. The same moral necessity still exists for some to lead the Church in prayer, expound the Scriptures, administer ordinances, and feed the members with spiritual knowledge. This alone can be done by a ministry pious and educated, who make the religious instruction of others the work of their lives. It is said, indeed, by some that ours is the dispensation of the Spirit, and that outward agencies suitable enough for the Church in Jewish times are not required now. But the answer is obvious. This is not more an age of the Spirit than during the lifetime of the apostles, when God poured out of His Spirit upon all flesh, when sons and daughters prophesied, young men saw visions, and old men dreamed dreams. If at such a time the apostles did not dispense with the ordinary ministry, but set up pastors and deacons, bishops and elders, in the Churches, much less can the Church dispense with them

now. They are still needed "for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ." That work is not finished; the Church, therefore, still needs a ministry.

5. Special provision is made for the continuance of the institution. That the apostle never intended that the Church after his death should be left without instructors appears from his charge to Timothy—"The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." This shows that ministry was not the prerogative of all. It was limited, at least so far as teaching was concerned, to men; these men must be able to teach, which all Christians are not; and they must be faithful men, receiving the deposit of truth from those in office before them. This provision for its continuance proves that it was not the design of God that the ministry should ever pass away.

6. But in Eph. iv. 13 a limit is fixed; what is that limit? "*Till* we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Saints on earth have not yet attained unity of faith, nor reached the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Till that high standard is achieved, the permanence of the ministerial office is secured. By other passages of Scripture we know that this does not apply to apostles, prophets, and evangelists; it must therefore apply to the ordinary ministry alone.

7. The permanency of the ministry is assumed in the words of Jesus, Luke xii. 42. Ministers are "stewards of the mysteries of God," whose duty is to dispense spiritual food to the family; and their existence up till the second advent is implied in the words—"Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall set over his household to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh will find so doing." The true minister will be found at his post when the Master comes.

OBJECTIONS.

These arguments for the permanence of the divine institution seem to us conclusive. There is one difficulty, however, in the way of accepting the conclusion which deserves attention. It is founded on two passages of Scripture (1 John ii. 27 and Heb. viii. 11) which seem to teach that there is a time, either present or future, when the ministry of men will be needed no more:—

"And as for you, the anointing which ye received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any one teach you."

"And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them."

The former of these passages was addressed by John to the saints of his own time; the latter is a clause in the new covenant made with the spiritual Israel, and applicable to the saints at any time since the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews wrote. The difficulty is to fit in the truths here taught so as to make them harmonize with other truths which Scripture teaches on the subject. But although we fail to reconcile apparently inconsistent truths, we do not diminish but rather increase the difficulty by accepting the one class of passages and denying the other. We deny neither, we implicitly accept both. There must be some sense in which the Church of God needs the ministry of men which God provided for their good, and there is a sense in which a true saint needs no human teaching whatever. True saints do not need to be taught to know the Lord, for they know Him already; and the spiritual perception of divine truth already revealed is something that one believer cannot communicate to another, but is derived only from the anointing that is given by God. But although the service of the ministry is not needed for these purposes, it is needed for other purposes already stated. This consideration may not entirely remove the difficulty; but we are to remember that the inspired writers, who used these words, did not themselves regard them as inconsistent with the work of the Christian ministry; for both were themselves teachers, and one of them at least sanctioned the use of the ministry in the instruction of others

(Acts viii. 14, 15; Gal. ii. 9; Rev. i. 11). The author who wrote such a passage as Heb. v. 12 can scarcely be regarded as disapproving the ministry of men as an aid in the instruction of Christians. The teaching of the Spirit no more makes the work of the ministry useless, than the anointing of the Spirit makes needless the word of truth. In heaven, where "there is no temple," there may be no need of teachers and rulers to officiate in the family of God; but while men are outside the golden gates, sinners need the gospel, and the flock requires to be fed.

On the grounds thus stated we found the conclusion—*That in each Church there existed a class of men, who had functions to discharge different from those of ordinary Church members, and that the existence of these officials in each Church is a divine and permanent institution.* This is the principle known as *The Ministry.*

MINISTRY FOUNDED ON NECESSITY.

This principle also has its foundation, not only in Scripture, but in the nature of things. No society can act or discharge its functions with effect except through its officers; till they are appointed it can scarcely be regarded as organized at all. A meeting called for secular purposes first appoints its chairman. The political society must have its president and secretary. The charitable society nominates its officials—president, treasurer, secretary, and acting committee. These officers can do on behalf of an association what a great ponderous body cannot do for itself.

So it is in the kingdom of grace. The diversified duties devolving on a Church are more efficiently performed by a few persons selected for the purpose, than by all the members in common. Women, usually composing one-half the membership, are by express statute forbidden to be public teachers in the Church. Of the remainder more than half are young people without Christian experience, members of families, themselves under instruction. Of male adults, the greater number are unfit to edify the Church from want of knowledge, want of time for preparation, want of training, want of nerve, or want of inclination. In an age of supernatural gifts, these

qualifications might not be necessary; but in a prosaic age like ours the want of them is fatal. Even in a large and intelligent congregation, perhaps not a dozen may be found "apt to teach" in an edifying manner, and willing to exert their gifts in public. But in the absence of an official ministry, no greater obligation rests on any two out of a dozen members than upon the other ten. What is equally the business of ten or twelve qualified men in a public body, comes in the end to be regarded as the business of nobody in particular, more particularly if the work demands heavy intellectual labour, and is followed with scanty recompense. The result must be that within a limited term of years, in all but exceptional cases, for want of some few persons to make public instruction and the management of Church affairs their business, the edification of the members would not be promoted, people would become remiss in attendance, religion would languish, and the Church would not thrive. Some sects which, like the Quakers two centuries ago, made the experiment of abolishing a stated ministry, have either suffered extinction already, or have barely escaped. Apart from Scripture altogether, reason suggests that special work shall be made by somebody his special business, and that for duties so important as those entrusted to the ministry, ordinary Church members are not competent.

Nor is it in accordance with Scripture and reason that all Church members, even if proved qualified, should be put into office. "If the whole body were an eye," says the apostle, "where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? And if they were all one member, where were the body?" This passage applies to the case before us. In the human body—the highest form of organization with which we are familiar—every limb or part does not claim to undertake in turn every function of the man. The feet do not usurp the duties of the head; nor does the head undertake the duties of the hand. The eye sees, the ear hears, the tongue speaks, the feet walk, the hands lay hold, and the mind, acting through the brain as its organ, governs and guides them all. The functions of life are best discharged, not when one member attempts to do the work that properly belongs to another, but when every member of the body

performs in the common interest the special work which nature designed it to discharge.

Now the Church in the highest sense is the body of Christ, and "God hath set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased Him." The work for which the Church exists in the world is best done, not by every brother insisting on his supposed right to act as pastor, elder, deacon, or private member exactly as his inclination prompts, but by every one knowing his own place, and attending to the special duties which attach to his position. The ecclesiastical machine moves smoothly and best fulfils its functions when the pastor teaches, and the elder rules, and the deacon distributes; when members believe and worship; when they honour God in daily life, and esteem and obey those who are over them in the Lord; and when every one in his sphere is careful to perform that portion of the work which the Head of the Church has committed to his special care. The general good of the congregation demands that duties so onerous and far-reaching in their effects shall not be entrusted to the fitful efforts of volunteers without responsibility, but to the steady and persevering action of men specially fitted for the work, and who at the call of the Church are regularly appointed to fulfil them. The due appointment of an adequate number of the best qualified men that the Church can find willing to undertake the service, is the arrangement which God has sanctioned, and is the best means of securing that the work will be done in the best way. Should it fail, as it somtimes does owing to human infirmity, no other method promises much.

ADVANTAGES.

The advantages of the divine institution of the ministry are:—

1. The most gifted members of a Church naturally become its leaders; and the people are most likely to avail themselves of the services of those who, from knowledge, training, and experience, are best qualified for the oversight.

2. The officers in New Testament times being selected from the most advanced and intelligent of its own members,

the Church had at hand a constant supply of instruction and direction in spiritual matters.

3. Church work in every department is likely to be better done when it is made the special business of the few, than when it is left to the voluntary and irregular action of the many.

4. The divine arrangement imposes a healthful check on the forwardness of some who stand more highly in their own esteem than in that of their brethren; and some of whom, instead of being teachers, need themselves to be taught "the rudiments of first principles of the oracles of God." Presumption takes honour upon itself; true merit modestly waits till it is called.

CHAPTER III.—THE DEACON.

EVIDENCE OF SCRIPTURE.

For the poor shall never cease out of the land.—DEUT. xv. 11.

I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.—ISA. lxi. 17.

He that is greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.—LUKE xxii. 26.

The poor ye have always with you.—JOHN xii. 8.

Distribution was made unto each according as any one had need.—ACTS iv. 35.

The young men arose and wrapped him round, and they carried him out and buried him.—ACTS v. 6.

In these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration (*διακονίᾳ*). And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables (*διακονεῖν τραπέζαις*). Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among yourselves seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word (*διακονίᾳ τοῦ λόγου*). And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, etc.—ACTS vi. 1–5.

Having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether . . . ministry (*διακονίαν*), let us give ourselves to our ministry . . . he that giveth, let him do it with liberality . . . he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.—ROM. xii. 6–8.

Communicating to the necessities of the saints.—ROM. xii. 13.

I commend unto you Phœbe our sister, who is a servant (*διάκονον*) of the church that is at Cenchreæ.—ROM. xvi. 1.

God hath set some in the church . . . helps (*ἀντιλήμψεις*)—1 COR. xii. 28.

They would that we should remember the poor, which very thing I was also zealous to do.—GAL. ii. 10.

To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons (διακόνοις).—PHIL. i. 1.

Deacons (διακόνους) in like manner must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless. Women in like manner must be grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.—1 TIM. iii. 8–13.

Forget not to show love unto strangers.—HEB. xiii. 2.

Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.—JAS. i. 27.

If any man ministereth (διακονεῖ), ministering as of the strength which God supplieth.—1 PET. iv. 11.

MEANING OF THE WORD.

How much wider in its range of application the Greek word διάκονος is, as compared with its derivative the English word *deacon*, will be obvious from a few examples. In its non-official sense it is a *servant*, one who ministers to, or serves another, without regard to the nature of the service, as in Matt. xxii. 13, "Then the king said to the servants (διακόνοις), Bind him hand and foot." It is frequently applied to the apostles and to Christian teachers who serve God in the ministry of the word, as in Col. i. 23, "The gospel . . . whereof I, Paul, was made a minister" (διάκονος). But when the service intended is one of ministration to the poor, the word διάκονος is rendered *deacon*, as in Phil. i. 1. The kind of service intended, whether secular, or spiritual, or pecuniary, is not therefore to be known from a word which is used to express any of them all, but from the circumstances of the case. When the translators understand it as expressing a Church officer appointed to minister to the necessities of the poor, then only they translate it by the term *deacon*.

The organization of the Church was gradually set up; each order of officers came into existence as the occasion for their presence arose. At first the apostles, who embodied all inferior offices in themselves, were the only Church officers.

Then when the number of disciples multiplied, and the work of ministration to the poor became so onerous as to interfere with the due discharge of other duties, the deaconship was created. The elder meets us at a later point.

RISE OF THE DIACONATE.

The diaconate had its root in that sympathy for the poor which the disciples learned from their Master, and which the Church, whether Jewish or Christian, felt from the first. In the overflow of their love and enthusiasm, many of the first Christians sold their goods, and without the compulsion of any religious or ecclesiastical command, they threw the product into a common fund, placed at the absolute disposal of the apostles, and out of which they distributed to the members of the community according to their wants (Acts iv. 35). They all within the Church stood on the same social level; they were of one heart and mind; and for the time selfishness itself seems to have died out, for "they had all things common." For this they have been branded as communists; but if so, their communism was of that rare order which very seldom shows its face among men. Communism, as we know it, studies to rob and to divide the property of others; the communism of the first Christians delighted to sell out their own property and to give it away. A voluntary surrender of this sort, though natural in their circumstances, could not abide, and no trace of it is found afterwards outside the Church at Jerusalem. There, however, it is exemplified on a large scale. The difficulty of distribution increased with the growth of the Church, and the complaints which arose in consequence gave occasion to a new order of ministers specially called into existence to take charge of the ministration to the poor.

The history of the institution of the diaconate is recorded in the sixth chapter of Acts. It originated at Jerusalem. It extended much farther than the community of goods, for we find it set up at Philippi, at Rome, at Cenchreæ, and at Ephesus. The poor never die out of the world; true religion never forgets the widow and the fatherless, and the money which the Church offers for the unfortunate requires

special officers for its wise distribution. Their qualifications are described with more minuteness than would be suitable, if the intention had been that the diaconate should die out with the apostleship. Regulations are laid down as to their appointment—"let these also first be proved." The permanence of the institution is warranted by the inexpediency of employing in distributing funds those whose business is the ministry of the word, as well as by the relief from the care of temporalities which it brings to those burdened with the weight of public instruction.

ANSWER TO OBJECTIONS.

The "seven" chosen by the Church at Jerusalem are not directly called deacons; but that they were the first officers of the order to which this name was afterwards applied there can be no reasonable doubt. The work to which they were appointed is described as ministration and service of tables (*διακονία* and *διακονεῖν τραπέζαις*); and the name of one who discharges such work would properly be the deacon (*διάκονος*). At least the minister of the poor and of the widows would have as good a claim to such a title as the minister of the word and of prayer; for the original term, as already said, means only *minister* or *servant*. If the history of the institution of the diaconate is not found in Acts vi., it is found nowhere else in the New Testament. From this two results would follow; the "seven" would fill an office which has no name, and the diaconate of the New Testament Church would, like the eldership, have no recorded commencement. Lastly, Irenæus,[1] the first Christian writer who touches on the original appointment, designates the "seven" as deacons.

We cannot agree with Mosheim[2] in the opinion that the young men who buried Ananias and Sapphira were deacons, and that the office existed before the transaction recorded in Acts vi. It is evident from that chapter, as well as from Acts iv. 35, that the ministration to the widows had previously been managed, not by the "young men," but by the apostles,

[1] *Heresies*, i. 26. 3, iii. 12. 10, and iv. 15. 1.
[2] *Commentaries*, Cent. i. section 37.

who after the appointment of the "seven" would be released for the performance of their own special duty—prayer and the ministry of the word. Besides, the work of interring the dead does not belong to Church officers. The relatives of the deceased usually charge themselves with that duty, and in their absence young and active men, who are not Church officers, are always found ready to pay the last tribute of respect. Further, the word younger (*νεώτερος*), used in Acts v. 6, is frequently used in circumstances where Church office is excluded and youth-hood alone is intended (1 Tim. v. 2, 14).

It is maintained by Vitringa[1] and by others, that "the seven" were entirely different officers from the "deacons" named in the Pauline Epistles. But if that opinion was true, we would be left in ignorance of the name of the office to which "the seven" were appointed; why they were formally ordained to an office which has no name; and why so much space is given in the narrative to the foundation of an office which cannot be identified with any other in the New Testament, and is not prolonged into the subsequent history. Such objections are fatal to the opinion. There is no sufficient reason, therefore, for departing from the common belief, that the sixth chapter of Acts records the institution of an order, and that "the seven" were the first deacons.

It is not a matter of great importance, but it may be mentioned that there is no evidence that these seven deacons were all Hellenists, except what may be inferred from their Greek names. This is a precarious basis for any conclusion of the kind, for names peculiar at first to one country soon make their way into another, and Greek civilisation had been at work in Syria from the time of Alexander. Philip is a Greek name; but we find a person so called among the twelve apostles, all of whom were of Hebrew birth. One such example is enough to show that no sound inference can rest on the mere coincidence of names. The opinion, however, is probable in some degree; and if the new officers were selected from the ranks of those among whom the murmurers were found, it proves the determination of the Church not to encourage anything which would produce partiality or division.

[1] *De Syn.* iii. 2. 5.

Although the liberality of the Church may not in all circumstances be such as to leave it in the power of a deacon to give very much away, yet we are never to make light of an office divine in its origin for which high moral qualifications are required, and the services of which are to be rendered in faith and love to God's poor saints. At the time when the institution was founded, Peter stated that the persons to be selected must be "men of good report, full of the Spirit and wisdom;" which shows the high spiritual qualities needed even for the lowest office in the Church. Let us note the minuteness with which Paul describes the qualifications it requires (1 Tim. iii. 8–13). He observes that the deacon must hold "the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience;" which intimates that the distributor of the Church's offerings needs to be sound in doctrine as well as pure in life. That he requires to rule his own family, shows that the office carried in it some authority, and must be filled by persons of firmness and decision; but the fact that he did not need, like the bishop, to be "apt to teach," proves that public instruction was not a duty which lay within his range.

DUTIES OF THE OFFICE.

What his peculiar duties were, we are left to infer from the circumstances set before us in the sixth of Acts, and especially from the service of tables there spoken of, as contrasted with the service of the word and prayer, to which afterward the apostles were to devote themselves exclusively. The language of Rom. xii. 9 is a little too general to entitle us to build much upon it; but along with some of the best interpreters, we understand the expression "giveth" in that passage as referring to the deacon's distributing, and the "showeth mercy" to his kindness in respect of the poor and sick.[1] The "ministry" of ver. 7 being applicable to the pastorate as well as to the diaconate, cannot be claimed by either. We feel on sure ground when we say, on the authority of Acts vi., that the deacon's office extended to the temporal

[1] Calvin (*Inst.* iv. 3. 9) understands the text to speak of *two classes of deacons;* but we cannot coincide in that view. To us it seems to speak of *two kinds of work,* both of which belonged to the deacon's office.

rather than to the spiritual concerns of the congregation—that its special work was not the ministry of the word, but the service of tables. It is almost superfluous to remark that this phrase does not refer to the table spread at the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, but to the daily ministration to the poor.

They who perform the duties of the deaconship faithfully gain for themselves "a good standing," that is, great honour in the office, and the respect and esteem of the Church. The "good degree"—the *βαθμός*—is not necessarily a step on the ladder of promotion, although in the Middle Ages it was so interpreted; and usually a candidate for the higher offices passed through all the grades, beginning with the lowest. To such an extent was this carried, that in some Churches the diaconate has ceased to be an office; it has sunk into a mere step to something above itself—a *βαθμός*, and no more. Yet it might be obvious even to a little consideration, that the scriptural duties assigned the deacon are no preparation for the pastor and teacher. Public instruction, if done as it ought to be done, is no easy task; and preparation for giving it is not to be acquired by any ministration to the poor, however diligent, but by meditation, education, and the study of the word of God. Nor is it to be forgotten that the difference between the deacon and the elder is not a difference in degree merely, but in office and order; and the distinction in their work is the distinction between the temporal and the spiritual. The deacon who becomes an elder leaves his own order and enters on another.

The case of Phœbe, "a servant of the Church (*διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας*) that is at Cenchreæ," proves not only that females were eligible to the diaconate, but that one at least filled that office with the approval of Paul. It does not, however, require us to believe that a female diaconate was universal or even general in the Churches, and still less that the deaconess filled a distinct and separate office of her own. Women, we may infer, were appointed only in cases where female ministration was wanted, and where some of the sex developed the necessary qualifications. In the discharge of duties to the sick and poor, cases no doubt often occurred where females could minister most tenderly to their own sex and where men might be practically useless.

Some doubt has been entertained whether the widow of 1 Tim. v. 9, 10 was a deaconess, or only a person to be entered on the list as eligible for the charity of the Church. Calvin[1] thinks that these widows were deaconesses, and that there were two degrees in the order. The same view was taken by some in the post-apostolic Church, and led to their exacting from deaconesses some peculiar qualifications.[2] But the opinion is open to question. From the deaconess an amount of active service would be expected, to which a woman of sixty would be scarcely equal. Paul does not assign to the widows any active duty, but speaks of those only drawing support from the Church. On the contrary, the glimpse of their condition given by the apostle conveys to us the idea that they were merely pious women, who, in their day, were hospitable and useful; but who, having been left desolate, were comforted by the Church's charity in the evening of their days. There does not seem to be anything in the passage of Scripture cited obliging us to believe that these women held any Church office whatever.[3]

That preaching was no part of the deacon's office we infer from three facts: first, it is not mentioned among a deacon's qualifications that he must be apt to teach; second, the reason assigned for his appointment was that he might attend to the ministry of tables, and others be left free for the ministry of the word; and, third, the office at Cenchreæ was filled by Phœbe, one who, on the ground of sex, was forbidden to speak in the public congregation (1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35). The "boldness" (παῤῥησία) promised as a reward for the faithful discharge of duty is not facility of speech, but that holy confidence with which one, conscious of a right and faithful discharge of the duties of his office, is able to approach both God and man.

Appeals have been made to the example of Stephen and Philip as showing the contrary. Of Stephen, however, it is not affirmed that he "preached;" but only that he "wrought great signs and wonders among the people;" that men belonging to the foreign synagogues "disputed" with him, and

[1] *Inst.* iv. 3. 9. [2] Bingham, *Ant.*, B. ii. chap. 22.

[3] Neander, *History of the Planting*, B. iii. chap. v. p. 154. See, however, on the other side, Jacob's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Lect. iv. p. 167.

that "they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake." Certainly it is not forbidden to a deacon, more than to another man, when assailed in argument to speak in self-defence, and to assign reasons for his faith but that is not what is usually understood by preaching. It is quite true, however, that Philip preached; but the defect in the argument is that it is not said that he preached while he was a deacon. Philip became an evangelist (Acts xxi. 8); and although, Scripture does not furnish material to enable us to fix the exact point at which he changed the one office for the other, it is reasonable to conclude that it was when driven out of Jerusalem by persecution, and when he could no longer act as deacon in the Church where he was chosen. He became a preacher, as we suppose, when he could no longer act as deacon; for, immediately after the persecution separated him from Jerusalem, we find him doing "the work of an evangelist." We cannot legitimately infer from the functions of the second office that he filled what were the functions of the first. Preaching and baptizing, as all admit, belong to the duties of the evangelist; it is not clear that they are the duties of a deacon. To the elder it belonged to "rule" and to "labour in the word and teaching;" but the Scripture never assigns to the deacon the ministry of the word—it only assigns to him the ministry of the poor. Even if it could be shown that occasionally the deacon preached and baptized, it would not be enough to prove the point. A physician might, in case of need, give spiritual advice to a dying patient, but that would scarcely prove that to pray with the sick belongs to the duties of a medical officer. Public instruction is a function specially assigned to the elder (Acts xx. 28; 1 Tim. v. 17; 1 Pet. v. 1–4), and we are not to believe without the clearest evidence that the same function is also assigned to a distinct and inferior office.

The only official work clearly assigned to the diaconate in Scripture is therefore the service of the poor. That implies more, especially in a large church, than at first sight appears. Its due discharge would demand a reasonable amount of investigation into the condition of applicants, as to whether they are fit subjects for Church support; of inquiry into

degrees of poverty, as to the number of the family, the amount of earnings, and the relative claims of the needy; into the numbers of the employed and the unemployed, and consideration also of the amount which, according to its circumstances, the Church could afford to bestow in each case. A deacon would regard it as his duty to act on the precept, that "if a man will not work, neither shall he eat;" to find employment if possible for those able and willing to work; and to counsel and to comfort the needy in their distress. Such duties, if really performed, cannot be light, and must subject deacons often to charges of partiality and ill-will, which a good man must learn to bear patiently for Christ's sake.

The deacon has all the authority attaching to his office; but his authority, unlike that of the elder, never extends outside the congregation within which he serves. The number to be appointed depends on the size and circumstances of the Church. The number in the Church of Jerusalem was seven; but we do not know the exact number in any other of the apostolic Churches. That a congregation so very large possessed seven only, suggests that the number of such officers in an ordinary church need not be very large, and that many are not to be appointed when a few can do the duties with efficiency and advantage. There is no magic in the number seven. The main thing is to have the work, whether it be light or burdensome, done well.

It must be acknowledged that the information supplied by the New Testament in regard to the deacon is not abundant. Four or five passages only convey direct instruction upon the subject. These passages determine with more or less fulness the work to be done, the manner of appointment, the qualifications for office, while they give the assurance that a faithful discharge of duty in this, the humblest of Church offices, is certain to receive due reward at the hand of the Master. But they furnish sufficient ground on which to rest this fact,—

That in the New Testament Churches there was set up under the direction of the apostles a distinct class of officers, whose business was to minister to the wants of the poor, and who are known by the name DEACONS.

ADVANTAGES OF THE DIACONATE.

A large religious society designed to be the centre of numerous and widely extended agencies and operations, and aiming at permanence, has secular as well as spiritual business which cannot be neglected. The deaconship is the divine institution founded for attending to these secular concerns. It presupposes love and liberality on the part of the Church; it is intended to secure care in inquiring into the necessities of the poor; and it requires judgment in distributing aid, and firmness in resisting improper applications. Where these qualities are found, the diaconate must be a source of strength to the Church.

1. The poor are not likely to be forgotten where good men are appointed, whose special business it is to attend to their wants. Private persons, occupied with their own affairs, and upon whom the Church has devolved no responsibility, can scarcely be expected to take much trouble in a matter which does not lie their way.

2. The cause of Christ is strengthened when it is found that the poor saints are carefully attended to by their Christian brethren.

3. The diaconate lightens the burden which would otherwise fall upon the Church teachers, and enables them to give exclusive attention to their own department of Church work.

4. The duty to "remember the poor," and to "communicate to the necessities of the saints," of which duty the deaconship in the Church is the visible expression, has, during eighteen centuries, covered Christendom with charities, to all of which paganism was a stranger — hospitals, infirmaries, asylums, workhouses, orphanages, and refuges for misery in many forms.

CHAPTER IV.—THE ELDER.

EVIDENCE OF SCRIPTURE.

The disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judæa: which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.—Acts xi. 29, 30.

Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers, Barnabas and Simeon. . . .—Acts xiii. 1.

When they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting. . . .—Acts xiv. 23.

When they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church and the apostles and the elders.—Acts xv. 4.

As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, which had been ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem.—Acts xvi. 4.

From Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church. And when they were come, he said unto them, . . . Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood. . . . These hands ministered unto my necessities. In all things I gave you an example, how that so labouring ye ought to help the weak.—Acts xx. 17, 28, 34.

The day following, Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.—Acts xxi. 18.

Having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy . . . or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry; or he that teacheth, to his teaching; or he that exhorteth, to his exhorting: he that giveth, let him do it with liberality; he that ruleth, with diligence.—Rom. xii. 6–8.

God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments.—1 Cor. xii. 28.

He gave some to be . . . pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ.—Eph. iv. 11, 12.

To all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.—PHIL. i. 1.

Epaphras, our beloved fellow-servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ.—COL. i. 7.

Tychicus . . . the beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord.—COL. iv. 7.

We beseech you, brethren, to know them that labour among you, and are over you (προϊσταμένους) in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake.—1 THESS. v. 12, 13.

If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. The bishop therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach, no brawler, no striker; but gentle, not contentious, no lover of money; one that ruleth well (καλῶς προϊστάμενον) his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity (but if a man knoweth not to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have good testimony from them that are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.—1 TIM. iii. 1–7.

Let the elders that rule well (καλῶς προεστῶτες) be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and in teaching. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his hire.—1 TIM. v. 17, 18.

The gospel, whereunto I was appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher.—2 TIM. i. 11.

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge; if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly. For the bishop must be blameless, as God's steward; not self-willed, not soon angry, no brawler, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but given to hospitality, a lover of good, sober-minded, just, holy, temperate; holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine and to convict the gainsayers.—TITUS i. 5–9.

When by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God.—HEB. v. 12.

Remember them that had the rule over you (ἡγουμένων), which spake unto you the word of God; and considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith.—HEB. xiii. 7.

Obey them that have the rule (ἡγουμένοις) over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account.—Heb. xiii. 17.

Salute all them that have the rule (ἡγουμένους) over you.—Heb. xiii. 24.

Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.—Jas. v. 14.

As each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; if any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God.—1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.

The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, . . . tend the flock which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according unto God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away.—1 Pet. v. 1–4.

The elder unto the elect lady and her children.—2 John 1.

The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.—Rev. i. 20.

NAMES APPLIED TO ELDERS.

Even as the temporal affairs of the Church were committed to the deacons, the spiritual affairs, in like manner, were entrusted to the second order of Church officers, usually spoken of in Scripture as the elders. The reader who runs his eye carefully over the passages of Scripture at the head of this chapter will have a fairly correct idea of what belonged to the office; the names given to those by whom it was filled, their qualifications, their duties, and their reward.

Those who filled the office receive in Scripture different names; they are called elders, bishops, pastors, teachers, preachers, ministers, stewards, and angels. Although these names are applied indiscriminately to the same order of Church officers, they are not synonymous in the strict sense of the word. Each of them describes the same Church officer, but presents him in a different light. *Elder* (πρεσβύτερος) is literally *an elderly person*, and preserves the fact that at first it was men ripe in age and experience who were appointed. This is the

name which is used in Scripture more frequently than any other to denote the occupant of the office. Bishop (ἐπίσκοπος), or overseer, is four times used of this officer. The Greek word was also used in a civil sense [see LXX. version of Neh. xi. 9] before it became the designation of a Church official. *Pastor,* or shepherd, always implies a flock, and is the name of one whose function is to tend and to feed it. The *preacher* is one who simply announces the gospel; the *teacher*[1] expounds and inculcates spiritual truth; the *minister* serves God in the ministry of the word; the *steward* makes spiritual provision for the household of faith; and the *angel* is the messenger or minister of the congregation. All these terms are expressive of different aspects of the one spiritual order.

IDENTITY OF ELDER AND BISHOP.

In the after ages, that is, from the end of the second century, the two words *bishop* and *presbyter,* the latter of which is the Greek form corresponding to the Saxon word *elder,* denote two different officers; but in the first century, of which alone we are now speaking, the two terms are different designations of the same official. The following are the grounds on which we accept this statement as true:—

1. The elders (πρεσβύτεροι) of Ephesus, whom Paul sent for to meet him at Miletus, are expressly designated the *bishops* (ἐπισκόπους) of the flock (Acts xx. 17, 28).

2. The reason assigned for Titus appointing men of spotless life to be *elders* in the cities of Crete is, that a *bishop* must be blameless. The reason thus given would be absurd if the two terms did not designate the same Church officer (Titus i. 5–7).

3. Paul, writing to the Church of Philippi, addresses his letter to the saints composing it, "with the bishops and deacons." No sound reason can be alleged for his omitting the elders, except that under the name bishops the elders are included (Phil. i. 1).

4. In writing to Timothy, the same apostle, after describing the qualifications of bishops, passes on to the deacons without referring to elders (1 Tim. iii. 1–13). This would be un-

[1] See discussion of the position of the Teacher in Owen, *Gospel Church,* chap. vi.

accountable if the elders filled an office different from that of the bishops.

5. The same qualifications are required in both. In 1 Tim. iii. 1–7 we have the qualifications of a bishop, and in Titus i. 5–9 we have the qualifications of those to be appointed elders. Six qualifications mentioned in Timothy are not mentioned in Titus, and seven of those in Titus are not mentioned in Timothy. But there are nine qualifications common to both Epistles; that is, they are stated either in the same or in slightly differing words in both, and for this reason these nine may be regarded as very important. Two of the latter—"apt to teach," and "able to rule his own house"—are specially important, because they lie at the foundation of the two main departments of duty into which the business of the office is divided. Such qualifications in both would be needless if it was not common to both to guide and to feed the flock.

6. The duties committed to the elder and the bishop are the same. The elders "tend" the flock (1 Pet. v. 2), and the bishops "feed" it (Acts xx. 28); the elders "rule" (1 Tim. v. 17), and the bishops "take care of the Church of God" (1 Tim. iii. 5); it was they who "laboured" among them, who "were over" them (1 Thess. v. 12); and it was "they that had the rule," who "spake to them the word of God" (Heb. xiii. 7).

On these grounds we rest the fact that *elder or presbyter and bishop are only different names for the same Church officer.* Be it carefully observed that we speak only of the New Testament Church; we do not speak of mediæval or modern practice, for in all the greater sections of the Church a difference between the bishop and presbyter has grown up and still exists. We speak only of the Christian Church of the first century; and with regard to it, we infer from the facts now stated that the same Church officer was then known by the two names elder and bishop. We adopt without reserve the words of Bishop Lightfoot on this subject: "It is," says he, "a fact now generally recognised by theologians of all shades of opinion, that in the language of the New Testament, the same officer in the Church is called indifferently bishop and elder or presbyter."[1] Hatch, another Anglican authority of

[1] *Comment. on Philippians*, p. 93.

high rank, speaks still more emphatically: "The admissions of both mediæval and modern writers of almost all schools of theological opinion have practically removed this from the list of disputed questions." [1]

Many people do not seem to be aware of the far-reaching consequences which flow from this fact, yet they are obvious even to a little reflection. If, as is now proved and candidly admitted, bishop and elder are different names for the officer who exercised spiritual oversight in the local Church, it follows of necessity,—

1. That the bishop is not superior to the presbyter by divine right; if the same name, qualifications, and work are ascribed to both, they are not different orders.

2. That the elder is not inferior to the pastor by divine right; for if they fill one and the same office, then everything affirmed of the one is necessarily affirmed of the other.

3. That ordination by a plurality of elders, the New Testament being the rule of judgment, is ordination by a plurality of bishops.

4. That a synod of bishops, the New Testament being the standard, is simply a synod of elders.

5. There was no official difference originally between bishop and presbyter; the only difference was in gifts, in labour, in usefulness, in influence, or in reward.

6. A marked official difference now exists. But this difference must be owing to lapse of time, to custom, to Church authority. From the beginning it was not so; it is not found in the word of God.

7. The bishop and presbyter were officially equal in apostolic times. In some Churches now the bishop occupies a superior, and the presbyter a subordinate position; therefore the supremacy of one to the other is a matter of human arrangement.

DUTIES OF ELDERS.

The two main duties devolving on the elder or bishop were to govern and to instruct the Christian society under his care. All elders were appointed to rule, and some of these

[1] *On the Organization of the Early Christian Churches*, Lect. ii. p. 39. Dean Stanley takes the same view. See *Christian Institutions*, x. 1.

ruled diligently, and some, in addition to ruling, "laboured in word and in teaching." These duties of the office make it clear why, as an essential qualification, every elder was required to be one who "ruled well his own house," and who was "apt to teach," that is, skilled in teaching. Under the head of teaching there is, of course, included preaching, exhorting, instructing the ignorant, administering the ordinances, and praying with the sick. Under the head of "ruling" is included admission of Church members, discipline, making provision that the worship of the Church shall be decently and orderly conducted, and acting as members of presbytery.

1. *Instruction.*

The work of instructing the local Church was the highest and most difficult work that devolved upon the elder or bishop. Of that Church he is an overseer appointed by the Holy Ghost. He and his brother elders are expressly commanded to "feed the Church of God" (Acts xx. 28), and that means to supply the members with that spiritual truth and knowledge necessary to sustain the spiritual life. Peter (1 Pet. v. 2) enjoined the elders in the Churches of Asia Minor to "tend" the flock, "exercising the oversight," and making themselves "ensamples to it;" but he who "tends" the flock and "exercises the oversight" is the shepherd or pastor, who, under the "Chief Shepherd and bishop of souls," leads the flock to the "green pastures" of the word and "quiet waters" of the ordinances. James (chap. v. 14) informs us that it is the duty of the elders, when called for, to "pray over" the sick. These passages show clearly that the idea embodied in the names—pastor, teacher, steward—was a reality, and that a prominent part of an elder's duty was the religious instruction of the Church—that is, tending and feeding the flock. But all this is true, of course, of the bishop as well as of the elder; for, as we have seen, elder and bishop are only different names for the same officer. The very oversight implied in the word bishop, the presbyter or elder is commanded to exercise.

2. *Government.*

The direction of the congregation in all its spiritual affairs was also entrusted to the elders. We infer this from a

variety of facts, which go to show that its government was by divine right placed in their hands.

1. The various names given to these officers imply authority. The name πρεσβύτερος (elder) is a name of dignity founded on the respect that in all civilised countries is shown to age. In the Septuagint version of Judg. viii. 14, the elders rank next to the princes in Succoth. The ἐπίσκοπος (bishop) is a name which is, literally translated, *overseer* or *inspector*, but carries in it an idea of authority; it is the name which the LXX. in Num. xxxi. 14 apply to a military officer who has the command of others. The word ἡγούμενος (leader) is an epithet applied to the civil rulers by the Septuagint (Deut. i. 13), and even to Christ Himself in His capacity of a ruler: "Out of thee shall come forth a governor" (Matt. ii. 6). The name οἰκονόμος (steward), applied to him in such passages as 1 Cor. iv. 1, is also a name of authority given to those who rule in households over children (Gal. iv. 2), and also in communities. The name pastor or shepherd, also applied to him (Eph. iv. 11), is a name repeatedly given to magistrates and kings, both in classical writers, who call them "the shepherds of the people," and in the Scripture (Micah v. 5, Septuagint). The elder is one of the κυβέρνησεις (governments) in 1 Cor. xii. 28, a metaphor founded on the elder's likeness to the pilot who steers and guides the ship. He is the προεστώς, one that ruleth (1 Tim. v. 17), a name expressive of one *who stands in front* of the troops and leads them on to battle, and is applied to the ruler of a city or kingdom. With the exception of the word *minister*, every name describing this Church office is in its origin expressive of authority.

2. That the rule of the local Church was committed in the apostolic age to the elders, accounts for the fact that in 44 A.D., the year of famine, the relief from Antioch for the brethren in Judea was sent to the elders (Acts xi. 30). In the end of the second century a similar benefaction would have been sent to *the* bishop. That they instruct the congregation in common, is intimated by the position and acts assigned to all without any apparent exception; they are bishops charged with the oversight of the flock, and are bound to "feed" it (Acts xx. 28); they are "over them in the Lord" (1 Thess. v. 12); and obedience to them is enjoined as a Christian

duty (Heb. xiii. 17). Being rulers, they are entitled to "honour;" if they rule diligently, they are worthy of "double honour;" but if, in addition to being successful rulers, they are laborious public teachers as well, their claim to this double honour is still better deserved (1 Tim. v. 17). That celebrated passage makes it clear that there were elders who ruled more diligently than others, and who on that ground were entitled to a higher reward. It is no less plain also that some ruled well who did not "labour in word and doctrine." Ruling and teaching were two different functions of the same office; but while every elder was free to discharge both, yet in practice each attended to that department of the office to which he was most inclined by personal gifts and taste, or by the requirements of the congregation. Teaching and ruling were the main functions of the one office which all filled; one elder might excel as a ruler, another as a teacher, while perhaps some two or three might have capacity for both. Each laboured in that department of the office for which he felt himself best adapted.[1]

3. The apostle urges upon elders to give themselves earnestly to that department of the office which they selected as their own: "He that teacheth, to his teaching; or he that exhorteth, to his exhorting . . . he that ruleth with diligence." Teaching, exhortation, ruling, are not different offices, but only different duties belonging to the same office. It must be noted also that, unlike the deacon, the sphere of the elder was not limited to the local Church, but extended in certain cases to other Churches, for we find in Acts xv. that the elders of Jerusalem join the apostles in issuing decrees, to which the Churches of Syria and Cilicia are found rendering obedience (Acts xvi. 4). This was clearly an act of jurisdiction, not limited to the Church in which they were chosen to act as elders. The provision thus made for ruling the Church by the

[1] We adopt implicitly the view of the presbyterate expressed by Bishop Lightfoot, *Comment. on the Philippians*, p. 192. "It is clear," says Mr. Hatch, "that the presbyters of the primitive Churches did not necessarily teach. They were not debarred from teaching; but if they taught as well as ruled, they combined *two offices*." He adds in a note that this is a clear inference from 1 Tim. v. 17. It would, in our opinion, be more correct to say "they combined two" *departments of the same office*. Hatch, Lect. iii. p. 78.

eldership or pastorate seems a pre-intimation that, after the apostles had passed away, there would be no further need for the rule of a superior order in Church matters.

4. The passage 1 Tim. v. 17 teaches that while all elders ruled, some did not perform the more onerous duty of public instruction; but it does not teach that there was any distinction of office between these two kinds of elders. We might with as much reason say that there was an official distinction between those who ruled and those who "ruled well." If the offices of teaching and of ruling elder were distinct, each office would have names, qualifications, and duties peculiar to itself but there is no distinction of name—all are elders; there are no distinct qualifications—the same qualifications are required from all (Titus i. 5–7); and to all elders the same duties are assigned of tending and of feeding the flock. If there was any distinction of office, there would be some duties assigned to the one class from which the other would be exempt. This is not the case. All govern and all instruct; all rule (1 Tim. v. 17) and all "feed the flock." The mere fact that some do not perform one department of the duties belonging to the office is no sound proof that these duties did not belong to the office, although some were specially diligent in that class of duties that they were best fitted to discharge.

5. The language of the New Testament makes it evident that the right to rule and the authority to teach were lodged in the same persons. We learn, for example, from 1 Thess. v. 12, that it was the same persons who "laboured" among them who were "over them in the Lord." From Heb. xiii. 7 we derive the information that it was they "that had the rule" who "spake the word of God." From ver. 17 in the same chapter, it may be seen that it was they who "have the rule" who "watch in behalf of souls;" while from 1 Pet. v. 1–4 it is manifest that it was they whose duty was to "tend" the flock who "exercised the oversight." It was the same persons who filled both departments of the office. To the same officer were committed the two great functions of government and instruction. The right to teach and to rule is therefore vested by the divine charter in all the elders. It is one of the most striking contrasts between the New Testament and the subsequent history, that in the New Testament the ordinary

government of the Church is so constantly enjoined upon the presbyters as to produce the impression that none but presbyters had the right to rule at all; whereas, in the history that follows, after the one original office has been divided into two, and the bishop rises to supremacy above his colleagues, the rule of the presbyter almost entirely ceases, and all Church jurisdiction henceforth centres in the bishop. No student of Church history can fail to notice this important change, proving as it does distinctly that the bishop of after ages is a very different officer indeed from the bishop of apostolic times.

From a careful examination of the scriptural evidence, as now presented, we arrive at this general conclusion:—*That the duties of ruling and instructing the local Church were committed to an order of officers all of equal official rank, but who, in the Scriptures, are designated indiscriminately by such names as elders, bishops, pastors, presbyters, ministers, and teachers.*

We might with the greatest propriety express this fact in the words of Bishop Lightfoot, who says:—

"The duties of the presbyters were twofold. They were both rulers and instructors of the congregation. This double function appears in St. Paul's expression, 'pastors and teachers,' where, as the form of the original seems to show, the two words describe the same office under different aspects . . . there is no ground for supposing that the work of teaching and the work of governing pertained to separate members of the presbyteral college. As each had his special gift, so would he devote himself more or less exclusively to the one or the other of those sacred functions."[1]

Although the elders of the congregation were officially equal, it cannot fail to be noticed that, according to 1 Tim. v. 17, some were entitled to more consideration than others. He who combined diligent rule with the laborious instruction of the people was entitled to double reward. He who was most abundant in labour, and on that ground entitled to honour, would be asked to preside at meetings of the Church for worship, and at meetings of the elders for Church business. The only hint of the presiding elder given in the New Testament is the "angel" spoken of in the early chapters of the

[1] Lightfoot on *Philippians*, pp. 192, 193.

Apocalypse. He is the "angel of the Church," that is, th *messenger* belonging to the Church, presiding first among hi equals, and as such representing the congregation, but withou any of the prerogatives or peculiarities that the third and sub sequent centuries assigned him. The first century does no furnish one particle of evidence to prove that among the elder there was any distinction of office; the only distinction wa one of gifts, and labours, and honour; the angel was the elde presiding among his fellow-elders *primus inter pares*, and wit their consent acting as pastor when the Church met togethe for public worship. One step farther, and the germ o PRELACY is reached.

ADVANTAGES.

To place each Christian congregation under the rule an instruction of a bench of elders, selected from the most intell gent and pious of its own members, and appointed by th apostles acting under divine authority, seems the best possibl arrangement which could have been adopted in the circum stances of that time. The apostles were limited in numbe and could not have been, in terms of their commission, per manent residents in any of the Churches. There was n educated ministry available. In an age of spiritual gift most of the Churches had in their communion a large numbe of gifted brethren, well qualified, in the absence of apostles, t instruct the ordinary members. What better thing could b done in the circumstances, than to set over each Church o worshipping society the most advanced of its own members t be the bishops and deacons of those who believed? Wha more natural than for these pastors or elders to ask the mos gifted and laborious of their number to preside among hi colleagues—first among his equals?

The advantages of this arrangement were,—

1. It drew into the service of the Church the best availabl gifts and attainments which the locality could afford, and fur nished a field for their cultivation and improvement.

2. It afforded each elder a sphere of labour, and permitte him to select the department of work most to his taste whether preaching, or teaching, or exhorting, or government.

3. It secured greater variety of instruction than if a Church had been committed to the care of a single individual.

4. The Church was not entirely deprived of instruction should the presiding elder be removed to another locality, or called away by death.

5. In the absence of an adequate supply of educated pastors, the best possible provision was thus made for promoting the faith and morals of the congregation.

CHAPTER V.—THE PRESBYTERY.

EVIDENCE OF SCRIPTURE.

Jerusalem.

Every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea: which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.—Acts xi. 29, 30.

When they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church and the apostles and elders.—Acts xv. 4.

The day following, Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.—Acts xxi. 18.

The Lycaonian Churches.

When they had appointed for them elders in every church.—Acts xiv. 23.

Ephesus.

From Miletus he went to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church.—Acts xx. 17.

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and in teaching.—1 Tim. v. 17.

Philippi.

To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.—Phil. i. 1.

Cities of Crete.

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge.—Titus i. 5.

Indefinite.

Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the church. —Jas. v. 14.

Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. —1 Tim. iv. 14.

RESULTS OF EVIDENCE.

Reviewing the evidence, we must remember what has been already proved, that bishop and elder were only different names for the same Church officer, and also, what will be proved afterwards, that in each city in the apostolic age, there was only one Church or congregation.

1. It is remarkable that the origin of the presbyterate as a divine institution is not recorded. The ancient Hebrews had officers named elders who assisted Moses in judging the people, and from a variety of sources we know that each synagogue had its elders. But the Christian elder has little in common with these officers except the name, and his powers and functions can be learned only from the New Testament. The first hint of such an institution in the Christian Church is given in the account of the famine in A.D. 44; the brethren at Antioch contributed in that year to the relief of the brethren in Judea, and the amount was sent to *the elders* by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. This shows that the institution was then in existence. The elders at Jerusalem are often referred to in the subsequent narrative.

2. Each of the Churches newly formed in Lycaonia and Pisidia had elders set over it by Paul and Barnabas. These congregations, gathered only a few weeks before in the midst of a heathen population, could not have been very large, nor far advanced in the knowledge of Christian truth; yet elders were appointed in every one of them. It has indeed been alleged, that if Paul and Barnabas had appointed only one elder in each of these Churches, the same language might have been used; but we cannot think so, because that is not the idea which the language suggests to an impartial mind, and because it would be contrary to the analogy of other Churches,—Jerusalem, Ephesus, Philippi, and the cities of Crete, each of which is known to have had a plurality of elders. We have no instance on record of the apostles entrusting any Church permanently to the care of a single individual. In every case there is a plurality of bishops or elders.

3. The Church of Ephesus was also governed and instructed by elders. We learn this from the fact that they met Paul at Miletus, where he delivered to them a farewell address.

4. The Church of Philippi had its plurality of bishops, no less than of deacons, as is plain from the first sentence of Paul's Epistle to that Church.

5. Titus was directed to appoint elders in every city of Crete,—a fact the full import of which can only be seen by remembering that in each city there was only one Church.

6. From the fact that James exhorts the sick to call for the elders of the Church, we may fairly conclude that each Church member had more than one of them within call.

7. The elders of any Church constituted its presbytery (1 Tim. iv. 14). A presbytery is simply the elders in session —"presbyteri in consessu."[1] The word *πρεσβυτέριον* occurs in two other parts of the New Testament (Luke xxii. 66 and Acts xxii. 5), where it refers to the bench of Jewish elders. When the Christian Church is organized, the name is applied to the Christian elders of a Church in their associated capacity. That it is not in 1 Tim. iv. 14 the associated elders of different congregations, is known because there is not in the New Testament any clear example of such association in ordinary cases.

Upon these facts we rest this conclusion—*That every local Church was placed by the apostles under the spiritual oversight of a plurality of elders or bishops, who, when associated together for ecclesiastical purposes, constituted a presbytery.*

ADVANTAGES OF THE PRESBYTERY.

Here again we note the principle of association, which runs through the whole apostolic system. Individual Christians associate together to form a Church. Individual elders associate to form a presbytery. Afterwards a further illustration of the principle will come under our notice. Our present concern is with the presbytery, composed of the individual bishops of the congregation. This arrangement, though not unsuited for

[1] A presbytery "is a meeting of presbyters orderly associated." Gillespie, *Notes*, p. 63.

any age, was specially suited for a time when the Christian community consisted mainly of the poor, and when spiritual gifts were plentifully distributed among Church members. The advantages were,—

1. A division of labour. The burden of labour and responsibility was not all imposed upon one individual, but being divided among a number, pressed more lightly on each.

2. A constant supply of ordinances. When a Church is provided with a number of teachers, should one be absent on some call of business, or be removed by death, another is always able and willing to take his place.

3. Avoidance of expense. The support of a single pastor, who would give his whole time to public instruction, might have been burdensome to what, outside the great cities, was always a small struggling society, some of them slaves, and nearly all of them poor. But when duties are distributed over a number, some may be able to labour without cost to the Church, and others, whose time is only occupied in part, could be more easily remunerated.

4. United counsel. Every matter affecting the good of the Church, instead of being decided by the arbitrary will of one individual, can thus be made a subject of deliberation among the wise and experienced, and a common line of action carried out by all.

A scriptural system scorns to rest a single pillar of the edifice upon human authority. But when a principle is found to rest upon the divine, it is pleasant to find it recognised by the ablest men. The "judicious Hooker" thus records his judgment: "The form of regiment by them [the apostles] established at first was, that the laity be subject to a college of ecclesiastical persons, which were in every such city appointed for that purpose. These in their writings they term sometimes presbyters and sometimes bishops."[1] Bishop Lightfoot is equally candid and explicit: "Jewish presbyteries existed already in all the principal cities of the dispersion, and Christian presbyteries would early occupy a not less wide area. On their first missionary journey the apostles Paul and Barnabas are described as appointing presbyters in every

[1] *Ecclesiastical Polity*, vii. 5.

Church. The same rule was doubtless carried out in all the brotherhoods founded later." [1] When able men, who have examined the subject carefully, agree in believing that the apostles established a presbytery in each of the New Testament Churches, it is strong confirmation of the fact, at which we have arrived on scriptural grounds alone.

[1] *Comment. on Philippians*, p. 191.

CHAPTER VI.—POPULAR ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

EVIDENCE OF SCRIPTURE.

And in these days Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren, and said (and there was a multitude of persons gathered together, about an hundred and twenty), Brethren, . . . of the men therefore which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John . . . must one become a witness with us of His resurrection. And they put forward two . . . and they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show of these two the one whom Thou hast chosen. . . . And they gave lots for them; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.—Acts i. 15–26.

The twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, . . . Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. . . . And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, etc.—Acts vi. 2–5.

And when they had appointed for them (χειροτονήσαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς κατ' ἐκκλησίαν) elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.—Acts xiv. 23.

IMPORT OF THE EVIDENCE.

On the methods by which apostles and prophets were selected for their work we need say nothing; the question we have to consider is, what means were taken to supply the local Church with its ordinary officers after the Lord Jesus had departed?

1. The choice of Matthias to fill the ministry and apostleship, left vacant by the death of Judas, is obviously not a case altogether in point; nevertheless, it furnishes presumptive evidence how the object was attained. This event occurred

at a meeting held in an upper chamber at Jerusalem, consisting of persons who are designated "brethren," that is, professed believers in Christ. These people were not all apostles and preachers, for their number exceeded that of the eleven and the seventy added together—"a multitude of persons about one hundred and twenty." Peter explained how the vacancy had arisen, and how it was necessary another should be appointed to fill the dead man's office, as the Scriptures had foretold. The speaker stated the qualifications required; he must be one of those "which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto the day He was received up from us." He announced the work of the person to be appointed: "Of these must one become a witness with us of His resurrection." The brethren, the whole assembly to which these words were addressed, then "put forward" two —Joseph Justus and Matthias. The word "elected" is not employed, but the language implies it, and is equivalent to it. Except that there were only two in their company who possessed the qualification, and that they were shut up to these two,—a supposition not very probable,—they could not put forward "two" without selecting them from others. Choice, therefore, is implied. They then prayed that the Lord would make it clear which of the two was acceptable to Him. Lots were cast, and the lot fell upon Matthias. No mention is made of his receiving any formal charge or commission, or indeed of any ceremony corresponding to ordination. The Lord's choice made everything of that kind needless. Forthwith Matthias was "numbered with the eleven apostles."

The original number being thus filled up, the apostles are afterwards spoken of as "the twelve" (Acts vi. 2; Rev. xxi. 14), a fact which may fairly be regarded as a divine ratification of the election. Those called "the eleven" apostles in Acts i. 26, could scarcely be called "the twelve" in Acts vi. 2, if the appointment of Matthias was not recognised; nor is it likely that it is Judas Iscariot, whose name is inscribed on the foundation-stones of the New Jerusalem, or who is one of those who "shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel," when "the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory" (Matt. xix. 28).

Attempts have been made to evade or distort[1] the transaction recorded in Acts i.; but it can scarcely be denied that we have here, on the face of the narrative, an instance of a Christian community electing a Church officer. Candour, however, compels us to add that the example does not bear directly on the case before us. Our present inquiry refers to the ordinary officers of a Church; but Matthias was very much more—he was an apostle. The case is quite unique; the election of an apostle is something which never can occur again. The only use, therefore, that we make of it is to furnish a presumptive argument in favour of the popular choice. If the inspired narrative supply a clear instance of an extraordinary officer chosen by a Christian body to fill the highest place, there is in this fact *prima facie* evidence that inferior and ordinary officers may be chosen in the same manner. That is the only use we wish to make of the fact. If one of the first officers in the Church was, under divine approval, chosen by the voice of the congregation, it is surely reasonable that the ordinary bishops and deacons may be so selected with divine approval also.

2. When the increase of the disciples and the generosity of the Church created a difficulty which the apostles, by their personal efforts, were no longer able to remove, they called the disciples together and submitted the conditions of the case. They showed how unreasonable it was that they should have to turn aside from their special work—the ministry of the word and prayer—in order to attend to the daily distribution. They recommended the selection of seven men, whose duty would be to look after this business. They explained the qualifications required—"seven men of good report, full

[1] Thus *Tracts for the Times*, No. 52: "It was His will that the *eleven disciples alone*, not Himself personally, should name the successor of Judas, and that *they chose* the right person. He gave testimony very soon after by sending His Holy Spirit on *St.* Matthias as richly as on *St.* John," etc.

This is a specimen of the loose and inaccurate language of that well-known work. The author of the Acts says nothing of *St.* John or *St.* Matthias; these were the titles of an after age. The Spirit was poured out on the twelve, and Matthias was not made an exception; but whether He was poured out as "richly" on any one as on any other, there is nothing in the record to convey. Nor is there an atom of evidence to show that Matthias was chosen by the eleven apostles *alone;* if that was so, why did Peter address the multitude, and what business had the latter to be there?

of the Spirit and of wisdom." They stated their readiness to appoint to office the men thus chosen, and their resolve to persevere in the duties more peculiarly their own. In accordance with this recommendation, the whole multitude chose seven men whom they judged suitable; these were presented to the apostles, and the apostles ordained them as deacons (Acts vi.).

Let it be noticed here the distinct and separate functions discharged on the one side by the apostles, who at the time were the sole rulers and teachers of the Church, and on the other by the people who formed its membership. The rulers determined the necessity for the appointment, fixed the number required, stated the qualifications they must possess, and ordained those who were chosen; the people chose the persons whom they judged to possess these qualifications, and the persons thus chosen the rulers appointed and ordained. The choice thus lay with the Church members; the appointment in due form was the duty of the rulers.

3. The only instance of the election of elders is found in Acts xiv. 23, where, speaking of the Churches of Lycaonia, the historian states of Paul and Barnabas — "So they had appointed for them elders in every Church [χειροτονήσαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς πρεσβυτέρους κατ' ἐκκλησίαν], and had prayed with fasting."

The Churches in which Paul and Barnabas appointed these elders were recently formed, and received their elderships or presbyteries within a very short time afterwards, that is, while the two apostles were out on their first missionary journey. The word "appointed" in the new version scarcely brings out the full force of the participle of χειροτονέω, which in its first and proper sense means to elect by voting with the outstretched hand.[1] Then it means *to elect* in any manner; next, to *ordain with outstretched hand;* lastly, *to appoint* in any form. The translators of the Authorized Version rendered the word *to ordain,* which is the ecclesiastical and later sense, and which they supposed to be its meaning here, being misled by the "prayer" and "fasting" named, which are the usual accompaniments of ordination. But although ordination re-

[1] "το χειροτονειν in prima et propria significatione designat *electionem*, quæ fit per suffragia manuum extensione data." Suicer, *Thesaurus* in verbum.

quires "stretching forth the hand" as well as election, and has therefore a basis in the radical meaning of the verb, still this sense is secondary and comparatively late. In this sense it is not found till we reach the *Apostolic Canons* and *Constitutions*, the date of which is the third and fourth centuries. The earliest sense is to *choose by suffrage;* but in the New Testament there is evidence that the word is used to express *choosing*, apart from the form in which that choice was expressed. Thus in Acts x. 41 we read of "witnesses chosen before of God" [προκεχειροτονημένοις]; and in 2 Cor. viii. 19 we are told of a brother [χειροτονηθείς] "chosen by the Churches." The former of these two passages is sufficient to show that the word in the New Testament age was used to denote *choice*, without reference to voting; and therefore we are not entitled to say that it must mean anything more than that in Acts xiv. 23. We are not, for this reason, justified in insisting here on the full philological meaning of the word; but we are justified in insisting that it means at least to *choose*, because that is the sense in which the same writer, the author of the Acts, uses it in another place, and because it is used in the same sense by Paul. We are not, however, to obscure its meaning by translating it, as in the Revised Version, *appoint*, without reference to choice, except it can be shown that it was so used in the New Testament or by writers of that age. This has not yet been done. An attempt has been made to supply this proof by various passages of Philo and Josephus,[1] but in none of the passages cited is there any necessity to depart from the original sense of the word. If Josephus says, for example, that "God ἐχειροτόνησε David to be king,"[2] the correct translation is, not that God "*appointed* David to be king," but "*chose* David to be king." It is not allowable to fall back on the third and fourth meaning of the word if the primary or secondary meaning is consistent with the facts of the case.

The accurate meaning, therefore, of Acts xiv. 23 is, "Paul and Barnabas having chosen for them elders in every Church;" that is, they presided or aided at the election of

[1] Hatch in Smith and Cheetham's *Dict. of Christian Antiquities*, article, "Ordination."

[2] *Antiquities*, vi. 13. 9.

the elders. The difficulty of the passage, as any may see at a glance, is that the action of the verb *χειροτονήσαντες* is ascribed to Paul and Barnabas. Whatever action is expressed by the verb, it is they we are told who performed it. If it means *appoint*, then they appointed; if it means *choose*, then it was they, not the people, who chose. But we must remember that the Bible is written in popular language, and it is common in every language to say that an act was done by a person, when the literal fact is that he presided only when it was done by others. A High Sheriff might fairly say that he had *elected* a county member, when all he did was to receive the nomination, fix the day of poll, and fill up the return. Besides, we must interpret the word and action in the light of the fuller record of Acts vi.

The translation of the word, to *elect*, is borne out by the *Didache*—the recently-discovered Greek work, acknowledged by scholars to be the oldest uninspired Christian writing as yet known. In the 15th chapter of that work we find these words: "Elect [*χειροτονήσατε οὖν ἑαυτοῖς ἐπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους*] therefore for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men meek, and not lovers of money, and truthful and approved."[1] The sense *to choose* is thus confirmed by an ecclesiastical document of the year 90, written, according to the general opinion, while at least one of the apostles was still living.

Commentators of different schools understand the word as we do. Thus, for example, CALVIN,—

"Therefore they two did create them; but the whole multitude, as the Grecians' manner was in elections, did by holding up their hands declare whom they would have. Even in like manner the Roman histories do oftentimes say, that the consul which kept the assemblies created new officers, for none other cause than that he received the voices and governed the people in the election."[2]

BEZA in his Latin translation of the Greek Testament thus renders Acts xiv. 23: "Quumque ipsis per suffragia creassent

[1] Schaff's *Didache*, p. 211.

[2] *Inst.* iv. 3. 15 (Norton's translation). The original is—"Creabant ergo ipsi duo, sed tota multitudo ut mos Græcorum in electionibus erat, manibus sublatis declarabat quem habere vellet."

presbyteros "—*and when they had created for them elders by suffrage*," and gives the ordinary explanation of the word.[1]

Dean ALFORD in his comment on the passage says: "Nor is there any reason here for departing from the usual manner of electing by show of hands. The apostles may have admitted by ordination those presbyters whom the Churches selected."

Mr. LITTON: "It is better, where there is no reason, as there is none here, for departing from it, to adhere to the natural and original signification of the word, which is *to appoint officers by means of suffrage;* especially when the practice of the apostles on other occasions is in favour of this interpretation."[2]

Vice-Principal HATCH: "We find in Rome itself, especially during the Republican period, the person appointed is said to be appointed, not by the people who elected, but by the officer who presided at the election."[3]

These opinions will serve to show, the only thing that we cite them to show, that we do not place any strained or unjustifiable meaning on the original of Acts xiv. 23; but that we may fairly regard it as our third proof for the principle of popular election.

Mr. Haddan entirely mistakes the point in dispute when he says that the word "leaves it undetermined whether St. Paul and Barnabas only *ordained* or did not also *choose* the Pisidian presbyters."[4] That is not the question; for none who knows the late date at which the word χειροτονέω came to signify *ordain* can have any doubt on that subject. It is a quite different word which is used in the apostolic age to express what we call ordination. That expression is ἐπέθηκαν αὐτοῖς τὰς χεῖρας, Acts vi. 6. The question is, did Paul and Barnabas themselves choose the elders, or did they preside and appoint while the members of the Church chose them. We are not unaware of the difficulty of understanding one verb to express the act of two different parties; but the

[1] "Ortum est verbum, ex Græcorum consuetudine, qui porrectis manibus suffragia ferebant." Beza, *Annotationes, in loco.*

[2] *Church of Christ*, p. 595.

[3] Lecture v. p. 130.

[4] Smith and Cheetham's *Dictionary of Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 213.

use of everyday popular language, as well as the fuller record of Acts vi., fully warrants us in putting on the original word the interpretation which we have stated.

4. The evidence is strengthened by the negative consideration, that in no part of the New Testament is there allusion to any other mode of appointing the ordinary officers of a Church.

On these grounds we hold that it is the right of the congregation to choose its own officers, both bishops and deacons. The evidence, indeed, is not abundant; but we must take it as it stands, and perhaps it will be found sufficient to guide any Christian, whose simple object is to know his own duty on the subject. Any man who chooses can submit the matter to an easy test. Let him take any other mode of appointing or selecting Church officers that he prefers, whether selection by a prelate, or by a Church court, or by the Crown, or by a layman, or any other method he pleases; let him cull from the New Testament all the passages he can find there to support any of these modes; then let him put those passages which he has discovered side by side with those now named in favour of popular election, and it will soon be evident, even to himself, that however small the amount of testimony in favour of the right of Church members to choose their own elders and deacons, it is much greater than that which can be produced in favour of any other plan whatever. It certainly does not leave us with a doubt that in the New Testament age *the Church officers were chosen by the members of the Church.* This is not an act of jurisdiction; it is simply a privilege conferred by Christ, and which is theirs by divine right.

ADVANTAGES OF THIS METHOD.

The advantages of popular election of Church officers are the following:—

1. It secures that elders and deacons enter on their work with the full confidence of the local society whose affairs they are to manage.

2. It accords with common sense, that those who constitute the Church, and support its ministry and ordinances, should choose its officers.

3. The Church members themselves ought to be the best judges of those qualified in other respects by whose instructions they are most likely to profit, and in whose guidance they can confide.

4. The right to exercise this privilege should induce Church members to feel their responsibility, and to take a deeper interest in spiritual things.

5. Rigid adherence to the scriptural rule raises a barrier in the way of self-conceited persons setting up as teachers of Churches, either at the suggestion of over-partial friends, or at the promptings of their own caprice. Without the choice of a Church, expressed in a call or formal invitation, no man is justified in assuming the pastoral or other ecclesiastical office.

OBJECTIONS.

The effort of an ecclesiastical writer of some distinction [1] to prove that "popular election alone is insufficient to constitute a minister of Christ," is virtually lost labour. Nobody has ever said, so far as we know, that such is the case in any regularly constituted Church; we, who believe that the ardent desire of the candidate, the possession of the necessary qualifications, the call of God, the invitation of the Church, and the ordination of the presbytery are all required, affirm the very opposite. He says that the fact is undeniable, that "no case occurs in the inspired history where it is mentioned that a Church elected its pastor." If so disposed, we might retort in kind by saying that inspired history does not record that either pope or prime minister ever nominated a prelate. But statements of that kind and counter-statements are not to edification. We are not sustaining a case, but only conducting an inquiry as to what the inspired record teaches in regard to the appointment of Church officers. We have ascertained that the choice of deacons and of bishops rests with the Church members.

It cannot be denied, however, that the principle of popular election is open to one strong objection. It affords a tempting opportunity to human nature to expose its own weakness, and scandal sometimes arises from the wrangling of Church

[1] Palmer, *Treatise on the Church*, part i. 8. 4.

members over the choice of their officers. But the practice, where it exists, is adopted because people believe it to be the practice sanctioned by the New Testament, not because it is above the possibility of being the occasion of evil. Every mode of appointment, with which human infirmity has anything to do, is subject to abuse. Other methods of appointment are attended with abuses, some of them not very creditable—simony, nepotism, intrigue, and corruption. We need not search for a form of Church nomination above the liability of abuse, for that in our circumstances it is impossible to find; the real question is to discover that which has the mind of God in its favour, so far as His mind can be known from His word. If the principle of the Christian people electing their own Church officers has the sanction of the word of God, we take it to be His will, and we are content to receive it on that ground alone; that point once established, we must guard against abuses of the principle to the utmost of our power.

It is sometimes alleged that the members of the congregation are not always qualified to use this privilege aright, and that to ask them to do so is as unreasonable as to set the sheep to select their own shepherd. If our present object was to compare and to balance mere human systems one against the other, with the view of finding out which is the most rational and workable, such a consideration as this ought not to be overlooked; but it has, and ought to have, no place when the inquiry is which mode of procedure is divine, and when, as we contend, the popular election of Church officers is the only divine plan. Such a human suggestion is of no weight against a scriptural principle. The members of the Church, even if better educated than most of them are, are as subject to commit mistakes as other men; but they often know by a sort of natural instinct to select from a number of qualified candidates the individual by whom they are likely to be most edified; and in cases where the officers required are chosen out of their own number, as ruling elders and deacons always are, there are no outsiders better able than they are to form a correct opinion of character and life. Believers are the sheep of Christ. It may indeed seem somewhat strange for the sheep to choose their own shepherd; but if the pastor

is chosen by one man,—a layman and often a stranger,—then the shepherd is chosen not indeed by the flock, but by a single sheep, who may possibly be the greatest sheep of all. Let each Church know its privilege conferred upon it by God, and let it exercise its right, relying on divine help and wisdom, nothing doubting. Even when it acts with the utmost care and discretion, it may not always be infallible in its action, but in general it will be competent to discharge fairly every duty imposed upon it by the Lord.

Milton deals with this objection thus:[1] "Who almost of the meanest Christians hath not heard the Scriptures often read from his childhood, besides so many sermons and lectures more in number than any student hath heard in philosophy, whereby he may easily attain to know when he is wisely taught, and when weakly? Whereof three ways, I remember, are set down in Scripture: the one is, to read often that best of books written to this purpose, that not the wise only, but the simple and ignorant may learn by them; the other way, to know of a minister, is by the life he leads, whereof the meanest understanding may be apprehensive. The last way to judge aright in this point is, when he who judges lives a Christian life himself. Which of these three will . . . exceed the capacity of a plain artisan? And what reason is there left wherefore he should be denied his voice in the election of his minister, as not thought a competent discerner?"

[1] *Apology for Smectymnuus*, in *Works*, vol. iii. p. 154.

CHAPTER VII.—ORDINATION.

CLEARING THE GROUND.

WHAT we have now to inquire into is the mode by which the ordinary Church officers were set apart to the duties of their office. Direct appointment by the Lord, testified to by supernatural signs, as in the case of apostles and prophets, supersedes every other mode of appointment. An extraordinary messenger sent from God, with due credentials, stands in no need of any human ordination. But this cannot always be obtained. Our inquiry refers only to the mode by which the ordinary pastors and deacons are to be designated. A divine call to the ministry consists in these four things: an inward impulse from the Holy Spirit, the possession of the required qualifications, an invitation from a Church, and ordination by the presbytery or eldership.

To an evangelist or missionary about to labour among a people where no settled Church exists, a call from a congregation is not necessary; but even in such a case an inward impulse from the Spirit of God, the necessary qualifications, and scriptural ordination ought never to be omitted. Of the impulse from within, none can be a judge but the man himself; of the moral qualifications, the Church can form an adequate notion; the designation in scriptural form can be conducted only by those in office before him. Ordination ought not to be omitted. The seven deacons did not enter on duty without it at Jerusalem; neither did Barnabas and Saul when going forth on the Gentile mission; nor Timothy when he became an evangelist and fellow-labourer with Paul. In each case, over and above the selection of the men, there was a formal setting apart to office by those already in the ministry. The distinctive characteristic of this designation was the laying on of hands. The whole ceremony is known

to us as *Ordination*. The word in that sense does not occur in the New Testament; but we have several examples of the rite to which the name is popularly applied.

In the Authorized Version the verbal form *ordain* occurs often. There are no less than *thirteen* Greek words, reckoning simple and compound, which are thus translated; but none of the thirteen denotes the action implied in the ecclesiastical ceremony.

Of these, it is manifest that the following seven can have no reference to the performance of any rite whatever:—

As many as were ordained [τάσσω] to eternal life believed.—Acts xiii. 48.

The decrees . . . that were ordained [χρίνω] of the apostles and elders.—Acts xvi. 4.

The hidden wisdom which God ordained [προορίζω] before the world unto our glory.—1 Cor. ii. 7. "Fore-ordained" is the word in the new version.

So ordain I [διατάσσομαι] in all churches.—1 Cor. vii. 17.

Good works, which God hath before ordained [προετοιμάζω] that we should walk in them.—Eph. ii. 10. "Prepared" is the corresponding word in the Revised Version.

Now when these things were thus ordained [κατασκενάζω].—Heb. ix. 6. The more accurate translation of the R.V. is "prepared."

Men before of old ordained [προγράφω] to this condemnation.—Jude 4. The new version reads—"set forth."

The remaining six might strike an unlearned reader of the A.V. as referring to some ceremony introducing to ecclesiastical office; but upon looking in each case at the corresponding word in the Greek original, a scholar sees at a glance that it can have no reference to any rite whatever. These six are as follow:—

He ordained twelve that they should be with Him.—Mark iii. 14. The mere English reader would naturally accept this as evidence that the twelve apostles were ordained in the ecclesiastical sense of that word. But it is not so. The word in the original is ποιέω, which means simply to *make*, to *appoint*. The R.V. reads more correctly—"He appointed twelve." The same remark applies to John xv. 16, only that the word used there is τίθημι, to *place*, the same as in 1 Tim. ii. 7.

Must one be ordained [γίνομαι] to be a witness with us of His

resurrection.—Acts i. 22. This looks very like the ordination of an apostle; but it is disappointing to find upon examination that the word so translated simply means *to be*, or *to become*.[1] The word "ordained" in this passage entirely disappears from the new revision, as it ought to do.

When they had ordained [χειροτονέω] them elders in every church. —Acts xiv. 23. The reference of this word, as already shown in the last chapter, is to election, not to ordination. At a later period the verb did come to signify *ordain* in the ecclesiastical sense; but we are not aware that any undisputed instance of this is to be found before the third century.

He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained.—Acts xvii. 31. The word here used is ὁρίζω, to bound, determine, appoint. In its application to the Judge of quick and dead, it can have no reference to any ecclesiastical rite.

Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle.—1 Tim. ii. 7. Here again the word is τίθημι, to set, to place; and it is translated *appointed* in the R.V. It does not contain even the remotest allusion to the act of ordination.

For this cause left I thee in Crete, to set in order the things that are wanting, and that thou shouldest ordain (καθίστημι) elders in every city.—Titus i. 5. This passage is often quoted as a case of ordination; but the word employed here does not denote any ecclesiastical ceremony; it means merely to make, to constitute, to appoint. The verb does not express or even hint at the manner of appointment. Here also the R.V. has the advantage over the A.V.; it translates the word *appoint*. How remote the meaning is from *ordain* in the ecclesiastical sense will be obvious when we mention that it is the same word in the original as that translated *made* in Rom. v. 19, "as through one man's disobedience many were made sinners"—that is, were *constituted* sinners. Still, as the appointment expressed by the verb was done by Titus under apostolic authority, the passage is not to be entirely overlooked in discussing the question of ordination. Though we cannot learn from it the manner of the rite, we may learn something else.[2]

Nothing more is needed than for any man in danger of being misled by the sound of the word *ordain* to turn up

[1] Notice how some polemics take advantage of the incorrect translation of the A.V. Thus *Tracts for the Times*, No. 52: "'One,' said he, 'must be ordained,' and without delay they proceeded to the *ordination*."

[2] Jerome regarded this text as proof of ordination by a presbyter, for that was the office which he considered Titus to hold. *Ep. ad Evangelum.*

these texts in the Greek Testament in order to see that the original cannot possibly denote the rite of ordination. The latter is always denoted by the term, "the laying on of hands."

THE LAYING ON OF HANDS.

This act, we learn from the New Testament, was used on different occasions, and for at least three purposes entirely distinct. These are not to be mixed up or confounded with each other.

1. At the miraculous healing of the sick (Matt. ix. 18; Mark v. 23, vi. 5, xvi. 18; Luke iv. 40; Acts xxviii. 8).

2. When the Holy Ghost and His supernatural gifts were imparted (Matt. xix. 15; Acts viii. 17–19, ix. 17, xix. 6).

3. At the conferment of Church office, as shown in other passages now to be considered. In this connection it is equivalent to *ordination*, that is, the public act by which a person is officially admitted into the *order* of the ministry. "The apostles," says Calvin,[1] "used no other ceremony when they admitted any man to 'the ministry' than the laying on of hands."

TESTIMONY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

The only passages of Scripture which bear on the question of ordination are the following:—

Whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.—Acts vi. 6 [ἐπέθηκαν αὐτοῖς τὰς χεῖρας].

Then, when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.—Acts xiii. 3 [ἐπιθέντες τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῖς].

Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.—1 Tim. iv. 14 [μετὰ ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου].

Lay hands hastily on no man.—1 Tim. v. 22 [χεῖρας ταχέως μηδενὶ ἐπιτίθει].

For the which cause I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee through the laying on of my hands.—2 Tim. i. 6 [διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν μου].

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge.—Titus i. 5 [καταστήσῃς κατὰ πόλιν πρεσβυτέρους].

[1] *Inst.* iv. 3. 16.

Not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the teaching of baptism, and of laying on of hands [ἐπιθέσεώς τε χειρῶν], and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.—Heb. vi. 2.

THE IMPORT OF THIS EVIDENCE.

Let us now consider what light is cast by these texts upon the subject of ordination.

1. In Acts vi. 6 we have the case of the apostles laying their hands upon the deacons. That this is an instance of what is popularly spoken of as ordination there can be no reasonable doubt; it is admitted both in ancient and modern times.[1] Let us note here that in scriptural times the very humblest Church officers were ordained; that they were ordained, not by one apostle only, but by all; and that the ceremony consisted in prayer and the laying on of hands. They were in this way invested with full authority to act as deacons in the Church.

2. In Acts xiii. 1–3 we have an account of Barnabas and Saul being set apart by the prophets and teachers at Antioch for the work to which the Spirit of God had called them. This was done with fasting, prayer, and laying on of hands. But here we are met by the double difficulty, What was the ecclesiastical rank of the ordainers? and, What was the office to which the ordained were set apart?

It seems evident that if the apostles were prelates, and the only prelates of their time, this cannot be a prelatic ordination in any sense; for whatever Simeon Niger, and Lucius, and Manaen may have been, they were not apostles. They receive no higher designation than "prophets and teachers." A prophet was simply an inspired minister, and the teacher was one of the ordinary instructors of the Church. Both were of the same ecclesiastical rank, the difference being that the one possessed a gift that the other lacked. All of them were presbyters at this point of their history; that is the highest order in the Church short of being apostles.

What, then, was the office to which Barnabas and Saul were set apart? Not to the apostleship, in the higher

[1] Irenæus, *Hær.* i. 26. 3; Wordsworth, *Outlines*, p. 214.

and ordinary sense of that term. Soon afterwards, indeed, we find both called apostles (Acts xiv. 4, 14), but only in the literal and non-official sense of that word, as *sent forth* by the Church at Antioch. Epaphroditus is afterwards called an *apostle*, that is, a *messenger* of the Church at Philippi, in the same sense (Phil. ii. 25). The conversion of Barnabas (Acts iv. 36, 37) was too late to enable him to see the Lord, except in some miraculous way which did not occur in his case; and consequently, though he might preach the resurrection, he was not qualified to bear "witness" to it (Acts i. 22). Paul was given this qualification in a miraculous manner, but as yet he was not raised to the apostleship; Ananias had indeed announced to him that he was destined to that office (Acts xxii. 15), but the announcement of a fact in the future and the fact itself are not exactly the same thing. The precise time of Paul's accession to the apostleship admits fairly of difference of opinion, inasmuch as the time is not mentioned in Scripture. We incline to the opinion that it dates from his interview with Elymas (Acts xiii. 6–12). By the miracle wrought on that sorcerer he gave the first indication of his possessing the signs of an apostle (2 Cor. xii. 13); and the transition from the lower to the higher office is marked by the change of name. Henceforth the Jewish name Saul disappears, and ever after this the Roman name Paul is maintained consistently throughout. He had reached the apostolic dignity before the council, when for the first time his position was recognised by the other apostles (Gal. ii. 7–10). But there is nothing to indicate that he was constituted an apostle by the act of his ordination.

Two obvious reasons can be assigned for the statement that what was conferred upon Saul and Barnabas at Antioch was not the apostleship. What was given to the one with the laying on of hands was given to both, for the rite was the same to both; but Barnabas was never an apostle in the official and higher sense of that word. The highest Church office then at Antioch was that of prophet and teacher; that is, they were presbyters, or, as has been proved, bishops in the New Testament sense; and it is not reasonable to think that they could confer on others an order higher than they filled themselves. Besides, if the act at Antioch raised Paul

to the apostleship, he could not have affirmed so strongly as he afterwards did, that the office which he held was not derived from man or through man (Gal. i. 1). Nor could this have been an ordination to the ministry or pastorate of a Church in the ordinary sense, for both of them were Church teachers already, and had laboured in the gospel at other places.

The office to which they were designated may be known from the special work which from that time they set about to perform. Henceforth they ceased to labour in organized and settled Churches, but travelled from country to country, preaching the gospel to all who knew it not. They became itinerating ministers. But that is the office described already as that of the *evangelist*. The prophets and teachers of the local Church were now to send forth these two men on their travels to carry the gospel to strange lands, and to discharge duties with which hitherto they had not been familiar. This act is done by men co-ordinate in rank with themselves. No doubt there is a difficulty, which we need not try to conceal. If the evangelist is a higher office than that of teacher in a local Church, then the teachers at Antioch ordained two men to higher rank than that which they held themselves; but if the evangelist and the teacher are co-ordinate in rank, then the prophets and teachers ordained two men merely to a different department of duty, which implies a second ordination in the same order. To us, accustomed to a new ordination in a new order, a double ordination in the same order seems somewhat strange; yet upon the whole this view is to be preferred. The laying on of hands in connection with Church office marks this out as an ordination; were it not for this significant act, it would correspond as nearly as possible to what we now call an installation or designation—something like what occurs when a pastor gives up the care of his flock, and is formally set apart as a missionary to the heathen, or a teacher in a theological school.[1]

This is the first example on record of a strictly Presbyterian ordination. The men who laid hands upon Saul and Barnabas were not apostles; Niger, Lucius, and Manaen have no place on the list of the twelve. They were not deacons, for the

[1] This act is regarded as an ordination by various writers of name; for example, Bishop Wordsworth; see *Outlines*, pp. 145 and 215.

simple reason that they are described otherwise—"prophets and teachers." On the supposition, which with many is an article of faith, that there were three orders only in the apostolic Church, these teachers, when they belonged neither to the highest nor lowest orders, must have belonged to the middle order — the order of presbyters. Being neither apostles nor deacons, what else could they be but presbyters or congregational bishops? Yet it is they, and not a prelate, or single individual of any order, who set apart Saul and Barnabas to the great work of their life.[1] This fact enables us to judge of the candour of a statement which Mr. Haddan[2] attributes to Bishop Taylor, that "there is no example in Scripture of any ordination made but by apostles and bishops." We would wish to see the proof that Niger, Lucius, and Manaen were either apostles, or even bishops, in the modern sense. Bishop Taylor should have informed us by whom these diocesans were consecrated, where their dioceses were situated, and, especially, how five of them were all engaged in "ministering" to the one congregation. But if these men were bishops in the New Testament sense of the word, then they were elders or presbyters; and that is what we believe and affirm. The ordination at Antioch was a Presbyterian ordination, for every one of the ordainers was a presbyter; it was also an episcopal ordination, for every one of these presbyters was a New Testament bishop. Bishop Wordsworth[3] attempts to destroy the argument for Presbyterian ordination supplied in this passage, by saying that the case was "special and extraordinary;" but this is scarcely consistent and becoming in a writer who gravely rebukes the Westminster Divines for saying that apostles and prophets were "extraordinary ministers."[4]

[1] Haddan, p. 84, feels the force of this example, and tries to escape from it, by saying that this was not "an ordaining of either apostle; it was an extraordinary *solemnity* upon an extraordinary occasion." He candidly admits, however, "that those who partook in it were already presbyters at the least is plain by the word λειτουργούντων in ver. 2."

[2] *Apost. Succession*, Appendix B, p. 316.

[3] *Outlines*, p. 215.

[4] "They [the divines] made apostles to be wholly extraordinary ministers; they made Timothy and Titus to be wholly extraordinary ministers; they made prophets to be wholly extraordinary ministers." *Outlines*, p. 215.

3. The third passage is 1 Tim. iv. 14, which refers to the ordination of Timothy. Four questions here present themselves for consideration :—

(1.) *What is the office to which Timothy was thus appointed?* It is not directly named, but we know it from the work in which he was subsequently engaged. He became Paul's companion in labour; he travelled from country to country, and from town to town, preaching the gospel; going and coming under the direction of the apostle in the service of God and His cause. He was like Barnabas,—an itinerating minister,—a presbyter without any fixed sphere of labour. To ordain to such an office, the presbytery, without any election by the people, had a perfect right. Election by the Church members is necessary to any officer, whether bishop or deacon, in the local congregation, but is not necessary to a minister, who, like Timothy, goes out to labour among the unbelieving. His office was that of evangelist,—the same as that to which Barnabas and Saul were set apart at Antioch.

(2.) *What is the gift that Timothy was commanded not to neglect?* The answer to this question exhibits much divergence of opinion. One says it was the prelatic office,—"the very office which has ever since been handed down from bishop to bishop;"[1] but such an office is not usually conferred "with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." Another says: "Timothy received the *χάρισμα* of holy orders;"[2] but in looking over the list of New Testament charisms, we do not find that "holy orders," that is, ordination, is included among them. Others,[3] with more probability, say it was "the *office* of teaching." But, as it appears to us, the gift is not so much "the office," as something special in connection with the office, designed to make him more useful in it, and conferred as a token of divine favour.

The context suggests this view of the passage. The injunction of the apostle in the preceding verse is: "Give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching" [*τῇ παρακλήσει, τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ*]. He immediately adds: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy." The

[1] Scott's *Talk*, p. 113.
[2] *Theophilus Anglicanus*, note at p. 102.
[3] Anselm, Lombard, Bucer.

close connection compels us to believe that "the gift" is the "exhortation and teaching," to which, in the previous sentence, he had enjoined him to take heed. First, he puts the precept positively, "take heed" to the thing; then, to add emphasis to it, he puts it negatively, "neglect" it not. Now, if we turn up to the list of gifts or charisms already given,[1] we find that παράκλησις and διδασκαλία—exhortation and teaching—constitute the very first of those official gifts needed in some degree by every minister,—skill or aptness in teaching,—the power of communicating truth and of giving an impulse to other minds in an acceptable manner. His youth had hitherto prevented him from acquiring by repeated effort the habit of easy and graceful speech; but the special gift bestowed by the Divine Spirit at the time of his ordination removed every possible objection to the appointment of so young a man, and put in his possession a useful instrument which he must not allow to rust for want of exercise. There was something quite unusual, not in the conferment of the gift, but in bestowing it at the very time when the hands of the presbytery were laid on, in order to invest him with office. But there was something very appropriate in this special case. While the presbytery, with the laying on of hands, admitted him to office, the Holy Spirit conveyed the gift necessary to make him useful in the office to which he was appointed.

(3.) *What had prophecy to do in the case?* Let it be remembered that a divine intimation had led the prophets and teachers to ordain Barnabas and Saul. Timothy, in like manner, had been the subject of prophecies (1 Tim. i. 18) before he was ordained by the presbytery at Lystra. Fourteen years after that event he was still young (1 Tim. iv. 12); he must therefore have been very young when at first he became the companion of Paul (Acts xvi. 3). Though "he was well reported of by the brethren," even then the presbytery of Lystra might fairly entertain scruples whether one so young possessed all the gifts necessary for the high office of evangelist. But the announcements of the prophets, of whom, in that age of charisms, almost every Church had a number, made it certain that along with the authority to teach there

[1] Book i. chap. 4, *ante*.

would in his case be given the capacity. Thus it was that there occurred in his case what we are not sure has ever occurred in any other: God conferred the gift of exhortation and teaching simultaneously with "the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." The gift was given, not by (*διά*), but with (*μετά*), that is, *along with* the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. The preposition (*μετά*) specially marks the coincidence of time and place.[1]

(4.) *What is "the presbytery" of the text?* We answer, the elders of the local Church in their associated character. In the only other occurrences of the word in the New Testament, *πρεσβυτέριον* refers to a body of men who, in the cases to which we allude, are Jewish elders (Luke xxii. 66; Acts xxii. 5). That the elders, of which the presbytery in 1 Tim. iv. 14 is composed, are Christian, not Jewish, does not alter its general reference to a body of men. We must interpret it in consistency with the fact that a plurality of elders were appointed in each Church, and did not as yet meet in the capacity of ruling over associated Churches.[2]

Calvin in general was accurate, but he made a mistake in his interpretation of this word. He took *πρεσβυτέριον* in this passage not to signify the assembled eldership of the congregation, but the office which the eldership filled.[3] In that case it must be translated thus: "Neglect not the gift *of the presbyterate* that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of hands." But to this there are various objections.

(*a*) The *presbyterate* is never mentioned among the charisms, although the persons who filled the office, and their special qualifications, may be so named.

(*b*) The Greek word for office is not *πρεσβυτέριον* but *πρεσβυτερεῖον*.

(*c*) The translation proposed involves an unnatural con-

[1] Bishop Wordsworth, in *Outlines*, p. 84, says that the preposition *μετά* (with) implies "the effectual action of a higher authority." This is a strange idea to be conveyed by a simple preposition. He might as well say that the same preposition in the verse, "My children are *with* (*μετά*) me in bed," marks the "effectual action of a higher authority." On the contrary, it marks merely coincidence in place and time.

[2] See chap. v. *ante*.

[3] *Inst.* iv. 3. 16.

struction, amounting to a transposition of words; it makes πρεσβυτέριον, the last word in the sentence, depend on χαρίσματος, a word near the beginning, and separated from it by an entire clause.

Elsewhere, when commenting on the passage, Calvin in part corrected the error of interpretation expressed in his *Institutes*, by saying, "They who think that πρεσβυτέριον is here used as a collective noun for the college of presbyters, are, I think, correct in their opinion; although, after weighing the whole matter, I acknowledge that a different meaning is not inapplicable; that is, that presbytery or eldership is the name of an office."[1] The latter part of the sentence still shows some degree of hesitation; but Gillespie has satisfactorily answered his statement on the subject.[2] Now, at the end of three centuries, some writers cite the erroneous opinion into which Calvin fell without any reference to his retraction or modification.[3]

The text 1 Tim. iv. 14 may be thus paraphrased and understood: Do not omit to cultivate the endowment of exhortation and teaching, which, in accordance with the previous intimations of the prophets, the Holy Ghost conferred at the time when the presbyters of the Church ordained you to the office of evangelist.[4]

4. The passage 1 Tim. v. 22 adds nothing to the elucidation of the point in dispute. "Lay hands hastily on no man" merely conveys that the ceremony is not to be performed hurriedly, that is, without inquiry and without knowing something of the character of the man thus admitted to office; an admonition which, if it refer to ordination at all,[5] we must admit to be important. If it referred, however,

[1] Comment. on 1 Tim. iv. 14.

[2] *Miscellany*, chap. viii.

[3] As, for example, Porter, *Reply to Apostolic Church*, p. 50.

[4] Pope Leo I. (see Epistle 88) does not approve the doctrine embodied in this text, for he says, "It was never heard of that presbyters ordained presbyters and deacons, much less bishops." Presbyters in Leo's time had lost the power of ordination, which was appropriated by the bishops; but that the presbyters of the New Testament exercised the power which they had in Leo's time suffered to pass away from them, is obvious from the text.

[5] Haddan, *Apostolical Succession*, p. 88, understands 1 Tim. v. 22 to refer to confirmation: "If the laying on of hands means, or includes (as it almost certainly does), confirmation," etc.

either to healing the sick or to the conferment of spiritual gifts on Christians, there could be no obvious propriety in forbidding haste; in such cases the sooner the better. Obviously, however, there is an affirmative implied under the negative precept; to forbid a hasty ordination, conveys a command to ordain in case that upon due inquiry and consideration everything is found to be right.

5. We class 2 Tim. i. 6, in which Paul says to Timothy, "Stir up the gift of God which is in thee, through the laying on of my hands," among the texts referring to ordination; not that we ourselves think that it does, but in deference to the opinion of various Episcopalian writers who assume it as a fact, and because we would not consciously omit any text which any intelligent writer regards as material to a just judgment on the whole case. But the text does not contain anything which makes it necessary to believe that it refers to the mode of investing with ecclesiastical office. It was the constant practice of apostles to lay hands upon individual Christians in order to confer upon them spiritual gifts (Acts viii. 17, xix. 6). A privilege which the apostle freely bestowed on ordinary disciples he was not likely to refuse to Timothy, who had such abundant opportunity of turning every talent to account; and if Paul ever conferred, by the laying on of his hands, any of the higher charisms on his friend, this, apart entirely from the act of the presbytery at ordination, would meet all the requirements of 2 Tim. i. 6. There is nothing necessarily to connect this passage with 1 Tim. iv. 14, or to oblige us to believe that the acts referred to occurred at one and the same time.[1]

On the contrary, there is something present which leads us to believe that they were different. The gift that came "with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" refers to the official charisms needful to the proper discharge of his office, namely, the "exhortation" and the "teaching" mentioned in the preceding verse; but the gift of God that

[1] Bishop Ellicott, however, does not take this view of the case. He says: "On the χειρῶν ἐπιθέσις [laying on of hands], see notes on 1 Tim. iv. 14, where it is *mentioned* that the presbytery *joined with the apostle* in the performance of the solemn act." *Comment. in loco.*

I have read over 1 Tim. iv. 14 very many times, but have always failed to find what the bishop says is "*mentioned*" in it.

comes through the laying on of the hands of Paul is something that can be excited to greater vigour, and therefore, like the faith that dwelt in himself, as well as in his mother and grandmother, is something partaking of the personal and moral. A man might fairly enough be called upon not to "neglect" a gift necessary to the fulfilment of the duties of his office, and which is sure to improve by exercise; but he could scarcely be called upon "to stir it up." That language would be more suitable in case of some private charism connected with personal feeling or experience. Had the two gifts been conferred at the same time and place, it would be difficult for Timothy to distinguish between them, and to say which he was to "stir up" and which he was "not to neglect." Mr. Litton candidly says — "It is more natural to suppose that the apostle alludes to different transactions which took place at different times." [1]

It is not necessary, however, for us to insist that Paul did not make one of the presbytery that ordained Timothy. Possibly he did. But if he ordained, why was the presbytery permitted to unite with him in the rite. They could not add to the validity of the apostle's act. They did not need to do so, in order to express their concurrence, or to bear their testimony to the fact. By virtue of their presence, without laying on hands, they could have expressed such concurrence and borne such testimony. One understands perfectly why a prelate in modern times invites a few of his presbyters to join him in the act of ordaining; it is the relic of the practice of a primitive and purer age, while it is, at the same time, an attempt at evasion of the evidence which 1 Tim. iv. 14 affords for a different system. But supposing presbyters had no right inherent in their office to ordain, their being permitted to do so by an apostle in the first century seems unaccountable. We can scarcely be wrong in understanding this permission to be the apostolic recognition of their right to ordain, and an intimation of the persons with whom the

[1] Litton's *Church of Christ*, p. 567, note.

"The χάρισμα," says Ellicott, *in loco*, "is as *a spark of holy fire within*, which he is not to let die out for want of attention." A moral gift may indeed be improved by effort; but "the mystical gift of priesthood," which some understand the gift of 2 Tim. i. 6 to mean, cannot well be stirred up.

right should continue to rest, when the apostles in person would be with the Church no more.[1]

In the effort to show that "the gift" of 2 Tim. i. 6 is identical with that of 1 Tim. iv. 14, some writers call attention to the fact that the preposition *διά*, expressive of the instrumental cause, is used in the former passage, and *μετά*, expressive of the concurrent cause, is used in the latter. But this does not affect the case, even if we suppose that Paul did not write in popular language, but always applied his prepositions with the most scientific precision. What we say is, that the two verses refer to two distinct transactions, in one of which a personal charism was bestowed by God upon Timothy through the instrumentality (*διά*) of Paul; in the other of which an official charism was conferred by God at a time concurrent with (*μετά*) his ordination by the presbytery. We say that even if we accept the improbable supposition that the two transactions were in reality one and the same, then the laying on of Paul's hands was the instrumental cause (*διά*) of conferring the gift, and that the Holy Spirit conferred it at the time (*μετά*) concurrent with his ordination by the presbytery. In either case our interpretation of the meaning does not require us to veer from the most minute classical distinction between the two prepositions.

Perhaps a reason why some writers, without any apparent grounds, maintain so stubbornly that the gift in 2 Tim. i. 6 refers to ordination, is that if this verse is surrendered, there is then no case in the New Testament of one man investing another with ecclesiastical rank. In that case, ordination by a prelate would have no scriptural foundation. But although we might admit that 2 Tim. i. 6 is parallel to 1 Tim. iv. 14, and interpret them both in consistency with our principles, yet we do not see proof that the gift communicated through the laying on of Paul's hands had any reference to ordination. A presbytery had no reason to lay on hands except for the conferment of ecclesiastical office; but an apostle often laid

[1] Stillingfleet, *Irenicum*, p. 275, concurs in this view of the case, asking pertinently enough, "If the presbytery had nothing to do in the ordination, to what purpose were their hands laid upon him?" and stating that "Every one being himself advanced into the authority of a Church governor, hath an internal power of conferring the same upon persons fit for it."

hands on persons who were not appointed Church officers, and upon whom nothing except a spiritual gift was bestowed.

6. The passage Heb. vi. 2 does not add anything to our knowledge of this subject. It merely enumerates "laying on of hands" among the first principles of Christ, but leaves it quite uncertain whether the reference is to the healing of the sick, the bestowment of spiritual gifts upon those recently baptized, or investment with ecclesiastical office. Some divines, such as Ames, Hooker, Cartwright, and others, think the reference is to ordination; but even so, we cannot infer much from the bare mention of the thing.[1] As already shown, Titus i. 5 is equally indecisive; it affirms appointment, without reference to the mode of appointment. We cannot be sure whether Titus alone ordained, in which case this example would be unique in the New Testament, or whether, as is affirmed by those who contend for 2 Tim. i. 6 referring to the same transaction as 1 Tim. iv. 14, he merely joined in the act of the presbytery

QUESTIONS IN REGARD TO ORDINATION

The facts supplied in Scripture enable us to answer a variety of questions which are often asked upon the subject.

1. *What is the Significance of the Action in Ordination?*

To lay hands on persons when entering on public office, is a practice of high antiquity. When Joshua was selected as successor to Moses, we read that "he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and he *laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge.*" This was appointment to civil office; but the same act is, as we have seen, sanctioned by authority on admitting to ecclesiastical office, and is most appropriate in itself. The act is a symbol of blessing. When the dying patriarch was about to bless his grandson, he put his right hand on the head of Ephraim and his left on the head of Manasseh, and prayed for them in the well-known words—"The angel who

[1] See *Divine Right of Church Government*, p. 176.

redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." To take a higher example still. When the Jewish mothers brought their children to the Lord, and the disciples in their narrow-minded zeal would have thrust them away, Jesus Himself "took them up in His arms, and laid His hands on them, and blessed them." These passages show what is meant by the laying on of hands. The act is symbolic of blessing. Ordination is a work neither so important nor so useful as preaching the gospel and the administration of the sacraments; it is not named in the apostolic commission where these two things are enjoined, and it is expressly intimated that "double honour" is due, not to those who merely ordain, but to those who "rule well," and who, moreover, "labour in the word and teaching." Still it is significant in itself, and being sanctioned by divine authority, is not to be neglected.[1]

2. *Who are the Persons to be ordained?*

The only examples in the New Testament of persons who received ordination are the seven deacons, Barnabas, and Saul, and Timothy. These include every clear case of ordination recorded in the Scriptures. The passages Acts xiv. 23 and Titus i. 5 are sometimes cited, but improperly, as we have seen, the laying on of hands not being mentioned in either case. The elders in each of these cases were "appointed;" their ordination is merely an inference from their appointment, and not a trustworthy inference, for it is at least possible that they may have been appointed in some other way. There is in Scripture no direct and recorded example of the ordination of the teacher of any local Church, whether we call him presbyter, bishop, or pastor. This is the simple fact,

[1] In the *First Book of Discipline* (1560), drawn up by John Knox, the laying on of hands at ordination was confounded with the laying on of hands at imparting spiritual gifts, and, for want of the miraculous accompaniment, was pronounced to be unnecessary—"Other ceremony than the public approbation of the people and declaration of the chief minister, that the person there presented is appointed to serve the Church, we cannot approve; for albeit the apostles used imposition of hands, yet, *seeing the miracle is ceased, the using of the ceremony we judge not necessary.*" Chap. iii. 10. The *Second Book of Discipline*, prepared in 1578 with the aid of Andrew Melville, corrected this error; the effect of which was that for the first twenty years after the Reformation ministers in Scotland were appointed to office without laying on of hands.

account for it as we may. We explain it in this way. Pastor, elder, bishop, evangelist,—all belonged to the same order; they were presbyters or ministers. A prophet was an inspired teacher; an evangelist was an itinerating teacher; a bishop was a local and ordinary teacher. But inspiration, movement, locality, make no difference as to rank. All alike were presbyters, standing next in order below apostles and above deacons. The case of the deacons proves that there was nothing in ordination to make it unsuitable to the lowest order of officers in a Christian congregation. From the recorded fact that no less than three itinerating ministers were set apart to their work with the laying on of hands, we infer, and as we think fairly, that the ceremony was suitable to the setting apart of any minister, whether itinerating or stationary. In these examples of ordaining presbyters and deacons we are furnished with light for our guidance, and are instructed how to set apart the ordinary officers designed to be permanent in the Church. If any kind of hierarchical system was set up by Christ or His apostles, it is a very remarkable fact that there is no example of the ordination of a diocesan bishop, or the consecration of a prelate.

3. *Who have the Scriptural Right to ordain?*

The deacons, as we have seen, were ordained by the apostles. It was the prophets and teachers at Antioch who laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul. It was the presbytery that laid its hands on Timothy. In other words, the right and authority to ordain are according to the Scriptures vested in apostles, prophets, teachers, and the presbytery; and in nobody else whatever. But apostles and prophets have now passed away from the Church, and cannot be recalled. The full authority to ordain, therefore, remains with those whom the apostles and prophets, while still in the world, associated with themselves in the act—that is, the teachers of the Church and the presbytery. But, as has been shown, it is the teachers of the Church, that is, the elders or bishops appointed to rule and commanded to feed the flock, who constitute the presbytery. The presbytery is simply the bishops or elders of the local Church orderly associated. We conclude, therefore, that it is

with the presbytery, that is, the associated teachers and rulers of the Church, the sole right of ordination rests.

The cases sometimes cited, of Titus being left in Crete to "appoint elders in every city," and of Timothy being directed to "lay hands suddenly on no man," are not instances to the contrary. They are not clear examples of one-man ordination. The passage in Titus, as already shown, does not name the laying on of hands; and it is at least doubtful whether the passage 1 Tim. v. 22, where that phrase occurs, refers to this rite. There is nothing in the expression itself or in the context to forbid us to believe that it refers to the laying on of hands which was customary when miraculous cures were performed or the Holy Ghost conferred. Though Titus and Timothy had full authority to act as the apostle himself would have done had he been present, we have no right to infer without authority that they acted differently from the apostles when they ordained the deacons, or from what some writers believe that Paul did when he ordained Timothy. They would act in conjunction with the presbytery of the city. Paul had not left Crete or Ephesus without elders in each Church, more than he had left the Churches of Lycaonia (Acts xiv. 23); and although some had passed away and others were now needed, the surviving presbyters, where such could be found, would be called on to unite with Timothy in the work. In the word of God we have no instance, clear and undisputed, of ordination by a prelate, or indeed by one man; it is always performed by a plurality of Church officers. Nor is there any instance of ordination performed by the people; no doubt a case might be conceived, where ordination of officers might in a case of necessity be performed by a body of Christian people, organized as a Church, and cut off from all association with other Churches. But if such a thing were permissible in ordinary cases, Lycaonia in Paul's absence might have appointed its own elders, and there would have been no necessity to send Titus to Crete for such a purpose. In every instance where a presbytery existed, the presbytery ordained, and the presence of Titus guided their inexperience, aided in the work, and showed that what they did was done by apostolic authority. Nor do we deny the right of any scriptural bishop to take part in ordination; for none ordained

except the presbytery—the presbytery consists of presbyters; and every presbyter, as has been often proved, and all now admit, was a bishop. What we deny is the right of ordination by a prelate, that is, by a man who, without being an apostle, claims to occupy a higher grade than the congregational bishop. When apostles and prophets are not among us, the only scriptural ordination is by the presbytery; that is, by presbyters orderly associated, who like those of the New Testament are themselves bishops.

4. *What is the Scriptural Form of Ordination?*

The answer is, fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands. Fasting is mentioned once, prayer twice, and the laying on of hands three times, in connection with the appointment to ecclesiastical office. The imposition of hands is the most characteristic part of the ordination. It is certainly a very ancient ceremony. It was thus that the Levites of old were presented to the Lord, the children of Israel by divine direction laying their hands upon them (Num. viii. 10). Whether the appointment of a minister would be valid without this part of the ceremony is a nice question that we do not feel called upon to decide; our duty is to point out what was the scriptural form of designating Church officers, not to show what portions of that form may be safely neglected. Calvin with his usual good sense declares—"Although there be no certain commandment concerning the laying on of hands, yet because we see it was continually used among the apostles, their so diligent observing of it ought to be to us instead of a commandment."[1] The prayer, by which the act symbolic of blessing is accompanied, asks the divine blessing upon the person ordained, and commends him to the grace of God (Acts xiv. 26, xv. 40). The reference to fasting is rather indefinite, left purposely so, because the same conditions are not always found to exist, and the same rule would not be convenient in every case; we are not told whether the ordination fast is to be partial or complete, the parties who are to participate therein, or the length of time to be spent in the exercise. The want of specific direction on these points is

[1] *Inst.* iv. 3. 16.

not sufficient reason for its entire disuse. The importance attached to the rite may be inferred from the special injunction that it is not to be performed with undue haste ; assuming that 1 Tim. v. 22 refers to ordination. Evil may result to all concerned from a hasty and ill-considered appointment.

5. *What is conferred in Ordination ?*

The opinions entertained on this point are very various, inconsistent in some respects with each other, and few of them borne out by anything to be found in the word of God. One authority professes to believe that the person ordained receives along with the office the Holy Ghost as well ;[1] but although Christ and the apostles bestowed the Holy Ghost on whom they pleased, it is not in evidence that this was done by others of inferior rank, nor ever in a case of ordination. Another says that what is received is "the *ordaining grace* of the Holy Spirit ;"[2] but Scripture nowhere speaks of "*ordaining grace.*" We might as well speak of matrimonial grace in the priest, or electing grace in the congregation, or disciplinary grace in the elders, as of ordaining grace at the laying on of hands ; Scripture speaks of none of them. Another says : "the mystical grace of priesthood, grace for the valid performance of holy functions, which may exist equally in those who have saving faith in Christ and in those who have not."[3] The "grace" which exists in those who have no faith in Christ must be in its nature very "mystical" indeed ; while as to "priesthood," it was not till near the end of the second century that the sacerdotal idea in the ordinary ministry first appears in the Christian Church. The Scripture does not give us the slightest hint that any of these things was conferred in ordinary cases, whether upon deacon or bishop, by the most valid ordination. Even the *charism*, which was conveyed to

[1] "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands." *Anglican Ordinal.*

[2] Theophilus Anglicanus, Part I. chap. 9. An American divine, in the *Presbyterian Review* for Jan. 1886, speaks also of "the grace of orders." Holy Scripture speaks of no such grace, though it be true that God may bestow grace at any time it pleases Himself.

[3] Litton's *Church of Christ*, p. 536.

Timothy along with "the laying on of the hands of the presbytery," was given through prophecy [διὰ προφητείας], thus showing that it was not an ordinary occurrence. The Head of the Church is not restricted in His gifts. He may bestow grace at ordination, as He may bestow it at baptism, or at marriage, or at worship, or in communion, or at death; but He has not bound Himself by promise to bestow grace at any particular time, or on any particular occasion. We have no right to believe that "*then* and *there* the promise will be fulfilled and the grace conferred,"[1] until we first show that God has promised to bestow grace *then* and *there* — something which, as it appears to us, cannot be done. Ordination does not necessarily impart the Holy Ghost nor any grace of the Holy Ghost, though it may please God in special cases to make it the occasion for doing so; nor does it give in ordinary cases to any man a fitness for the ministry which he did not previously possess.

The laying on of hands by the presbytery implies that in their judgment the person ordained possesses the grace and other qualifications which fit him for the office; it is his formal and official appointment to that office; and it gives him full ecclesiastical authority to discharge its functions.[2] Behind the ordination is the call of God which makes the true minister; but the public investment with office, and the right to discharge its duties, are conveyed in the divine ordinance of ordination. It is a solemn dedication to the service of God whether in the ministry of the word or in the ministry of the poor: and in that solemn act those in office before him ask for him God's blessing and bestow their own. But it imparts nothing to any candidate which for sufficient

[1] Bannerman, *Church of Christ*, Part III. Div. II. 3, 4.

[2] "It is ordination that *maketh men ministers.*" Gillespie, *Miscellany*, chap. ii. obj. 7. In chap. viii. he describes what is given in ordination as the "*exousia*, or a positive, authoritative, ministerial mission."

"Ordination," says Baylie, "is an act of jurisdiction, it is an authoritative mission, and *putting of a man into a spiritual office.*" *Dissuasive*, p. 194.

"Out of men," says Hooker, "thus endued with the gifts of the Spirit on their conversion to the Christian faith, the Church had her ministers chosen, unto whom was given ecclesiastical power by ordination." *Ecc. Polity*, v. 78. 9.

"The persons ordained were hereby admitted *in ordinem* among the number of Church officers." Stillingfleet's *Irenicum*, p. 306.

reasons may not be taken away. If it imparted grace, grace is something that one man cannot destroy in the heart of another; but if ordination only invests with office and imparts ecclesiastical authority to discharge certain duties, these are things which, if forfeited by misconduct, can be withdrawn by the same power by which they were bestowed.

6. *Is Ordination a permanent Ordinance in the Church?*

That regular and orderly appointment to office is one of the laws of the kingdom, we may fairly conclude from a variety of facts. First, God the Father sends Jesus and anoints Him with the Holy Ghost and with power (John xx. 22; Acts x. 38). Then Christ sends the apostles (John xx. 22; Matt. xxviii. 18–20). None of these were ordained in the ecclesiastical sense; but from this point the ordinary method of appointing Church officers begins to appear. The apostles lay hands on the deacons (Acts vi. 6). The prophets and teachers at Antioch lay hands on Barnabas and Saul (Acts xiii. 3). The presbytery lays hands on Timothy (1 Tim. iv. 14). Timothy is to commit what he has heard from Paul to faithful men, who themselves are to teach others also (2 Tim. ii. 2). From these passages, in absence of any intimation to the contrary, it may be fairly inferred that God's great work in the world is to be carried on by a succession of regularly appointed Church officers till the end —"till we all attain unto the unity of the faith."

The principle that we thus arrive at is—*That to the presbytery, that is, to the presbyters or bishops of the Church orderly associated as a body, belong the right and power of solemnly setting apart all Church officers with fasting, prayer, and laying on of hands.*

ADVANTAGES OF THE RITE.

The advantages of ordination are the following:—

1. It marks out in the most distinct manner the officers of the Church from the private members, fixing a well-known mark upon those authorized to teach its doctrines, dispense its ordinances, and manage its affairs.

2. It indicates clearly that the newly-appointed officers enter on their work not merely with the concurrence of their predecessors, but with all the authority they can confer.

3. It brings home forcibly to those ordained, that they must no longer without any sense of responsibility act as seems right in their own eyes, but that they have been dedicated to a special service under the King, and that it is their special business to perform the duties, which the Scriptures attach to the office to which they have been publicly appointed.

4. It lends dignity and importance to the office in the view of Church members and of all who respect the authority of the Lord. To hold the commission of the supreme civil power in the country of which we are citizens is justly regarded as an honour; but how much greater the honour, in the view of the children of God, to hold a commission from the King of kings!

Ignorance and priestcraft may surround the simplest rite with unscriptural and superstitious notions. Ecclesiastical wisdom may wish men to believe that ordination is capable of imparting the "grace of orders," whatever that means, or the "mystical grace of priesthood," or a "spiritual charism," or an indelible stamp of some kind; and it may teach that ordination by some functionary higher in rank than the pastors of Churches is essential to a valid ministry, or that the value of the pastor's services depends on there being no canonical flaw in his ordination. Such errors are not peculiar to the rite in question. Similar errors have been taught in regard to baptism and the Lord's Supper. What rite, however simple, has never been corrupted or abused? We are at a loss to say. But we can cordially adopt and affirm a saying attributed to Wickliff, the first and greatest of English Reformers—"It is a thousand-fold more grace to be a minister such as Christ has ordained, and by grace that God Himself giveth, than to be a pope or other prelate."

CHAPTER VIII.—CHURCH RULE.

TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE.

I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.—MATT. xvi. 19.

And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican. Verily I say unto you, what things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.—MATT. xviii. 15–18.

And when He [Jesus] had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.—JOHN xx. 22, 23.

They, then, that received His word were baptized.—ACTS ii. 41.

The Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved. —ACTS ii. 47.

Peter said unto him [Simon], Thy silver perish with thee.—ACTS viii. 20.

When he [Saul] was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way.—ACTS ix. 26, 27.

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.—ACTS x. 44.

When he was minded to pass over into Achaia, the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him.—ACTS xviii. 27.

Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, yet not to doubtful disputations.—Rom. xiv. 1.

Mark them which are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them.—Rom. xvi. 17.

If any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble; each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire.—1 Cor. iii. 12–15.

What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of meekness?—1 Cor. iv. 21.

It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles, that one of you hath his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, being absent in body, but present in spirit, have already, as though I were present, judged him that hath so wrought this thing, in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ: wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators; not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I write unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one, no, not to eat. For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within, whereas them that are without, God judgeth? Put away the wicked man from among yourselves.—1 Cor. v.

If any man loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema.—1 Cor. xvi. 22.

But if any hath caused sorrow, he hath caused sorrow, not to me,

but in part (that I press not too heavily) to you all. Sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the many; so that contrariwise ye should rather forgive him and comfort him, lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow.—2 Cor. ii. 5–7.

To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for what I also have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, for your sakes have I forgiven it in the person of Christ.—2 Cor. ii. 10.

What fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? Or what communion hath light with darkness?—2 Cor. vi. 14.

Come out from among them, and be ye separate.—2 Cor. vi. 17.

I do say beforehand, as when I was present the second time, so now, being absent, to them that have sinned heretofore, and to all the rest, that if I come again, I will not spare.—2 Cor. xiii. 2.

I write these things while absent, that I may not when present deal sharply, according to the authority which the Lord gave me for building up, and not for casting down.—2 Cor. xiii. 10.

I would that they which unsettle you would even cut themselves off.—Gal. v. 12.

Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of meekness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted.—Gal. vi. 1.

Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him.—Col. iv. 10.

Know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.—1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

We exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, be long-suffering to all.—1 Thess. v. 14.

We command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us.—2 Thess. iii. 6, 7.

If any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed. And yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.—2 Thess. iii. 14, 15.

Hymenæus and Alexander, whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme.—1 Tim. i. 20.

Against an elder receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses. Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear.—1 Tim. v. 19, 20.

A man that is heretical, after a first and second admonition, refuse; knowing that such a one is perverted, and sinneth, being self-condemned.—Titus iii. 10, 11.

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch on behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account.—Heb. xiii. 17.

If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works.—2 John 10, 11.

I wrote somewhat unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Therefore, if I come, I will bring to remembrance his works which he doeth, prating against us with wicked words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and them that would he forbiddeth, and casteth them out of the church.—3 John 9, 10.

I know thy works, and thy toil and patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men.—Rev. ii. 2.

I have this against thee, that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess.—Rev. ii. 20.

IMPORT OF THE EVIDENCE.

During His earthly life the Lord intimated in a manner sufficiently clear that the kingdom of heaven about to be established among men would be, under Him, a self-governing society. It belongs to the very nature of a society, and is inherent therein, the power to admit to membership those who profess to act in accordance with its rules, and to exclude those who violate the conditions on which they were admitted. By the nature of its constitution, as well as in virtue of certain privileges granted by its founder, the Church is vested with a similar power. The power of rule is given to the Church in the first instance, but the authority given is exercised through the officers. The officers, instituted by the command and with the approval of Christ, are the organs through which the Church acts.

The human body, with its various members each endowed with its own function, but all acting harmoniously together under one controlling power for the common good, is a scriptural illustration of the Church in its constitution and membership (1 Cor. xii. 12–27). We may use a similar illustration.

God bestows powers upon man, but these powers are always exercised through one or other particular organ to which a special function is assigned. He gives man, for example, the faculty of sight, but this faculty is attached to the eye, and can only be exercised through that exquisitely constructed organ. God gives man the power of hearing, but the exercise of that power is attached to the ear only; no other member of the human body can receive sound except the organ constructed for the purpose. The sense of taste is another faculty bestowed on man, but the tongue is the only part of the human machine that is competent to the work. So it is in the Christian society. Christ has endowed the Church with the power of rule, but that rule is exercised by the officers chosen by the Church, and acting in the Church under the authority and with the approval of Christ.[1]

The first indication of authority being exercised by the Church through its officers is to be found in Matt. xviii. 15–18. In case a wrong is done to one Christian by another, the injured is to seek a private interview with the wrong-doer, and tell him the wrong of which he complains. If the guilty admits the wrong and makes what compensation is in his power, the matter ends, and a substantial good besides is done to the wrong-doer himself, who by prompt and Christian action sets himself right with his fellow-Christians. But if he refuses to admit that he has done wrong, his fault must be told him a second time, but on this occasion in presence of witnesses. Should he still refuse to make amends, or even to recognise his fault, then the command is—"Tell it unto the Church." That is, tell it unto the congregation—to the public assembly of the Christian people. But the public assembly, consisting of men, women, and children, is not a

[1] So also Dr. Thornwell. See *Works*, iv. p. 272.

"The life of the Church is one; officers are but the organs through which it is manifested in acts of jurisdiction and instruction; and the acts of all officers, in consequence of this organic relation, are the acts of the Church. . . . The power inheres in her; it is exercised by them. . . . All the lawful acts of all lawful officers are acts of the Church; and they who hear the preacher or the presbytery, hear the Church. The case is analogous to the motions of the human body. Vital power is not in the hands or the feet; it is in the whole body. But the exercise of that power, in walking or in writing, is confined to particular organs. The power is one, but its functions are manifold, and it has an organ appropriate to every function."

tribunal competent to decide a case in which, it may be, evidence of a complicated nature shall have to be produced. They naturally refer it to those officers who have been chosen and ordained to be "over them" in the Lord, who may examine the case themselves, or leave it to arbitrators (1 Cor. vi. 1–7).

That Church officers have authority within their own sphere, and that Church members are under obligation to obey them (Heb. xiii. 17), has been already shown. To Peter, the "keys of the kingdom" were committed by the Lord. He who has the key, possesses the power of opening and of shutting the door by authority of the power under which he acts. Peter was the first to exercise that power in connection with the new Christian organization. He used the key of doctrine when, on the first Christian Pentecost, he preached to the Jews, and admitted those who received the word into the Church by baptism; and when, on a later occasion, he performed the same service for the Gentiles, in the person of Cornelius the centurion. He used the key of discipline when in an informal way he pronounced sentence of exclusion on Simon the sorcerer—a man who after receiving baptism committed a gross offence, to whom Peter declared in serious terms, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God."

The expression, "*binding* and *loosing*," is too indefinite to warrant us to speak with certainty as to its meaning. The power of doing so was, in the first instance, given to Peter: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." But to determine the exact import of the expression is the difficulty.

1. The natural interpretation, and that in accordance with the context, is to regard the *binding* and *loosing*, following the gift of the "keys" to Peter, as explanatory of that expression. They show the use that is to be made of the keys. The allusion is to the ancient method of securing the door of a building with chain and lock. If the door is shut by chain and lock, the door is bound, and the person outside is of course excluded. But by application of the key to the lock in a particular manner, the chain is loosed and the door opens. It is therefore a figurative form of expressing authority to

admit to the Church or to exclude from it. This interpretation makes it parallel with John xx. 23, "Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." Authority to admit believers, to exclude offenders, to restore penitents, is the idea conveyed by both passages.

2. The other interpretation is, that the binding and the loosing refer one to the power of imposing obligations or relaxing obligations on Church members by *precept* instead of *censure*. In this sense of the expression it would be equivalent to the power of infallible legislation. Peter, in common with other inspired men, had authority to impose new duties upon the members of the Church; or he had power to relax their obligations, and to set them free from duties which they had hitherto recognised. The Apostolic Council in Acts xv. exercised this authority when it *loosed* the Gentile Christians from all necessity to observe the rite of circumcision which some sought to impose upon them, and *bound* them to continue to abstain from meats offered to idols, from fornication, from things strangled, and from blood. It is possible that the "binding and loosing" in Matt. xvi. 19 is designedly left indefinite, in order that it may cover both kinds of obligation —obligation by censure and obligation by precept.

The first interpretation is that more generally adopted. The passage is usually taken to mean that to Peter was given power to *bind*, that is, to draw the chain across the Church door and shut it against the unworthy, and to *loose*, that is, to relax the chain and admit the penitent and believing. This is the authority to rule in the house of God. But it is to be particularly observed that this authority was not given to Peter alone. No doubt it was addressed to him in the first instance; but in Matt. xviii. 18 it is addressed to all the apostles in common, and addressed to them in circumstances which show that the authority conferred is not limited even to the apostles. The corresponding passage about "forgiving" and "retaining" sins was addressed to all the apostles, and not to Peter only. The exercise of Church rule was therefore specially conferred upon the apostles—the only Church rulers appointed during the public ministry of the Lord. They acted, while they remained on earth, as the supreme rulers of the Church.

Whom did the apostles appoint to exercise the authority of rule after they were gone? To whom did they commit "the keys"? To whom did they give power to "bind and to loose," to "forgive" and to "retain sins"? We answer—they alone have apostolic authority to rule now, when the apostles are gone, to whom the apostles committed that authority while they were yet alive. There was in the Church a class of officers who, as we have seen, are designated, without distinction, presbyters, pastors, elders, bishops, ministers of the word. It has been already shown[1] that the names given to this order are all, with one exception, expressive of authority, that ruling was their business, and that "double honour" was their reward in case they "ruled well;" that these officers were associated with the apostles in issuing those decrees at Jerusalem which the Churches of Syria and Cilicia considered themselves bound to keep (Acts xvi. 4); that some of the elders of the Apostolic Church undertook no other official duty except to rule; and that the general practice was that the government and instruction of the Church were conducted by the same order. The power of self-government, therefore, is given to the Church, but the Church acts through its officers appointed to rule, that is, through its eldership or presbytery.

RULE OVER CHURCH MEMBERS.

The object of Church rule may be described generally as the purity and perpetuation of the Church, providing for the spiritual good of its members, securing the administration of ordinances, and promoting the religious ends for which the society exists. But mainly it consists in the four following things:—

1. *The Reception of Members.*

Believers, on their acceptance of the gospel message, were admitted to the Church by baptism, and this ordinance was administered by persons already in office (Acts ii. 41, x. 47). The saints at Colossæ were to receive Mark to their fellowship; nor were those at Rome to deny this privilege to those who were weak in the faith (Col. iv. 10; Rom. xiv. 1).

[1] See in chap. iv., *ante*.

Persons were sometimes admitted to the membership of one Church on the report and recommendation of those who knew them elsewhere. When Saul, after his conversion, went to Jerusalem, the disciples were afraid of him, but the apostles admitted him to fellowship on the testimony of Barnabas (Acts ix. 26, 27). But while Church members are bound to treat the stranger thus admitted as a brother, the formal act of admission belongs to the rulers. These rulers are the elders. The admission of persons into the Christian society is part of that rule which, when duly discharged, has a reward promised, and if diligently discharged and accompanied by teaching, has a double reward (1 Tim. v. 17). The remuneration of the builder at the hand of the Master depends much on the kind of material and the nature of the edifice which he erects upon the foundation (1 Cor. iii. 8, 9).

2. *Edification of Brethren.*

Church members meeting in the same local society have an undoubted right to help, edify, comfort, admonish, and judge one another. Paul exhorts the brethren specially to "admonish the disorderly," to "encourage the faint-hearted," to "support the weak," to be "long-suffering toward all" (1 Thess. v. 14). "Do not ye judge them that are within?" says the same apostle in another place. But it is evident that this right is not limited to private members; those who are "over you in the Lord" have assigned them as their special work to "admonish" and to "watch for souls" (1 Thess. v. 12; Heb. xiii. 17). In the purest and best ordered Churches there may be found persons in danger of falling, or who have actually committed gross sins. Persons of this kind are to be dealt with tenderly, faithfully, wisely. Accusations or formal charges against private members, and still more against Church officers, are neither to be lightly made nor rashly entered upon; but persons who sin publicly and boldly are to be rebuked before the congregation in the ordinary ministrations of the word (1 Tim. v. 19, 20).

3. *The Exclusion of Offenders.*

Nearly everything known in regard to what is popularly called excommunication is to be gathered from the fifth chapter

of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, combined with 1 Tim. i. 19, 20, 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18, and Titus iii. 10. The following propositions sum up the main principles which are taught directly or are fairly deducible from what the Scriptures teach on the subject:—

1. Excommunication is simply exclusion from the communion and privileges of the congregation, and does not involve any civil punishment whatever. "Delivering to Satan" is an expression which sounds harshly, but it is neither the imposition of a civil penalty nor the infliction of bodily pain; we understand it to mean simply expulsion from the Christian society—shutting a man out of the Church, which is the house and family of God, and thrusting him forth into the world, which is the kingdom of Satan.[1] People who voluntarily withdraw from Church fellowship, voluntarily cut themselves off, and virtually inflict upon themselves the same penalty which the Church itself is only to do in the last resort. Scriptural excommunication in its *nature*, it must be clearly understood, is only deprivation of those privileges which people enjoy from membership in the Church. It is simply the exercise of that power which every society possessed of self-government claims, namely, power to expel from its membership any person who violates the conditions upon which he was admitted.[2]

2. The sins of which excommunication is the proper penalty are not sins of ignorance or secret sins, neither personal infirmities, nor sins the proof of which is doubtful, nor acts uncondemned in the divine word, but made offences only by the arbitrary decisions of men. Less aggravated offences are met sufficiently by instruction, admonition, remonstrance, censure, rebuke. Heinous sins, sins gross, notorious, avowed, usually overlooked by the civil law, but involving public scandal and bringing discredit on the Christian congregation, are the only proper subjects of Church discipline. It is such offences as incest, heresy, blasphemy, adultery, and so on,

[1] *Aaron's Rod*, ii. 7, p. 239.

[2] Christians, however, regard the penalty as severe. "Which horrid sentence, though it touch neither life nor limb, nor any worldly possession, yet has it such a penetrating force, that swifter than any chemical sulphur, or that lightning which harms not the skin and rifles the entrails, it scorches the inmost soul." Milton's *Reason of Church Government*, B. ii. 3.

persisted in, despite of all warning and rebuke, which justly incur the extreme penalty prescribed by the divine law. The kind of sin for which a man deserves to be cut off from fellowship is a sin which all admit without hesitation to be condemned in the Scriptures, which is admitted by the offender or clearly proved against him, and which he obstinately persists in, to the injury of religion and the scandal of the congregation, after all gentler dealing with him is in vain.[1]

3. The manner in which excommunication is to be performed is in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the presence and with the consent of the Church (1 Cor. v. 4). It is not said that the inquiry into the case, the examination of witnesses, or that agreement as to the sentence, are to be conducted in face of the congregation; but, as it appears to us, the sentence ought not to take effect without the consent of the Church publicly obtained.[2] We cannot put any other interpretation on the words, "I verily being absent in body, but present in spirit, have already, as though I were present, judged him that hath so wrought this thing, in the name of our Lord Jesus, *ye being gathered together*, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one unto Satan." Whether the consent to be obtained is unanimous consent, or merely the consent of a majority, Scripture does not prescribe;[3] but in so far as the consent of the Church falls short of being unanimous, the excommunication fails of its purpose. The part of the excommunication most effective for inducing the culprit to repentance is for the Church members to hold no unnecessary intercourse with the excommunicated man; but how can they be reasonably expected to discharge their painful part of the duty if they have not consented to the sentence,

[1] Owen's *Gospel Church*, chap. x. p. 213.

[2] Calvin takes a similar view of the case. "'The legitimate course to be taken, as shown by Paul, is not for the elders alone to act apart from the others, but with the knowledge and approbation of the Church, so that the body of the people, without regulating the procedure, may, as witnesses and guardians, observe it, and prevent the few from doing anything capriciously." *Inst.* iv. 12. 7.

[3] We may, however, fairly infer from 2 Cor. ii. 6, "this punishment which was inflicted of *the many*," that the incestuous man was excluded by a majority only, not by all.

and are not aware of the grounds on which it has been pronounced? That sentence ought not to be pronounced under any vindictive feeling, nor under any other persuasion than that if Christ Himself stood in the place of the elders, He would Himself pronounce that sentence. It is only to be pronounced after every gentler method fails. "Excommunications," says Gillespie, "ought not to be proceeded unto except when extreme necessity constraineth." [1]

4. No person except a Church member can possibly incur the sentence. It is impossible for a Church and its rulers to exclude from their fellowship a person who never belonged to the society. We cannot possibly put out a person who was never in. Excommunication, therefore, can take no effect on a pagan, a Jew, a person making no profession of Christianity, or even upon the member of another Christian Church. A sentence pronounced in these circumstances is simply null and void, and that on two grounds: first, that the rulers pronouncing sentence have no jurisdiction; and, secondly, that it is impossible to deprive a man of what he never possessed.[2]

5. Christians are forbidden to "eat" with any person thus excluded, or to have any association with him that can well be avoided (1 Cor. v. 11; 2 Thess. iii. 14, 15). That means, as we think, that they are forbidden to invite him to entertainments, or to accept invitations from him; but it does not mean that we are bound to rise from a public table if an excommunicated man sits down at it, or that, if he really need them, we are to decline to give him the ordinary necessaries of life. We are not prohibited from speaking to him; for to treat him thus would be to "count him as an enemy," which is expressly forbidden. On the contrary, we are commanded to "admonish" him, with the view of bringing him to repentance; but this implies that we must speak to him. It is a needless familiarity, without any spiritual good in view,

[1] *Propositions*, 28.

[2] It was for this reason that the Torwood excommunication, pronounced by Donald Cargill on King Charles II. and the Duke of York, was of no effect. These eminent persons belonged to another communion, and were not under his spiritual jurisdiction. The deed of Cargill was the act of a man driven mad by persecution, and not the sober deliberate act of a Church court ruling in its own sphere, and dealing with persons subject to its authority. See *Wodrow*, vol. ii. 224.

that Christians are forbidden to maintain with him; but it was never intended to interdict in regard to him the relative duties always existing, such as those between king and subject, husband and wife, parent and child. A child is not exempt from the duties which, by the law of God, he owes his father, nor a wife from those she owes her husband, nor a subject from those he owes his sovereign, because it happens that the father, or the husband, or the king, is excommunicated by the Church of which he is a member.

6. The main design of excommunication is the spiritual good of the offender. Christians are to keep no company with him, that he may be "ashamed," that he may be brought to repentance, that "the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." But subsidiary ends to be sought are, that scandal may be removed, and that the Church may show that it has no sympathy with sin; that the ordinances of the Church may be kept from profanation; and that the contagion of a bad example may not spread—"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

7. Excommunication differs widely in its object and instrumentality from anathema. The former is simply exclusion from the privileges of the local Church, with the design of bringing the offender to repentance, and to recover him from the ways of sin; if that grand design is not secured, its administration is a failure, The latter shuts out an offender from hope of pardon, and devotes him to eternal death. Excommunication is pronounced by the Church speaking through its rulers; but none has a right to pronounce an anathema upon a human soul except the Judge of all the earth, or one who speaks by inspiration of God (1 Cor. xvi. 22; Gal. i. 8, 9).[1]

8. The authority on which excommunication rests is the command of Christ. "Put away the wicked man from among yourselves," said His apostle. It adds tremendous force to

[1] Calvin, although he seems to think that anathema may be sometimes used in the Church, affirms also the distinction between it and excommunication: "Excommunication differs from anathema in this, that the latter, completely excluding pardon, dooms and devotes the individual to eternal destruction; whereas the former rather rebukes and animadverts upon his manners, and although it also punishes, it is to bring him to salvation by forewarning him of his future doom." *Inst.* iv. 12. 10.

the act when we read that what is done by the officers of His Church, in obedience to His orders, is ratified in the court above: "Verily I say unto you, what things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 18). To them also it belongs by express appointment to remit ecclesiastical penalties or to impose them: "Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." The best proof that this power of the keys was intended to be used by others than the apostles to whom it was originally given, is that it was so used by others in their lifetime with their consent and approval, and that some are charged with unfaithfulness for declining to use this power.

9. The part which the people are authorized to take in excommunication ought to be distinctly known. They are not to rejoice in the fall of a brother, but to mourn for the injury done to himself, and the dishonour which he has brought on the Church. However painful it may be to comply, it is their duty to consent to the sentence if convinced of the guilt of the offender. They are to avoid familiar association with him so long as he remains impenitent. They are to pray for his repentance and return to the Church. They are to rejoice in his restoration, and to welcome him as a brother.

10. Persons while under excommunication are not to be debarred from any privilege, such as uniting in public prayer, or hearing the gospel preached, to which outsiders are admitted. The Church offers such privileges to all, without exception, they being designed for their religious instruction and conversion.

11. Deposition from office does not necessarily imply excommunication. A man may prove himself unworthy of office, who may properly be retained as a private member of the Church.

4. *Restoration of Penitents.*

1. When excommunication serves the end for which it was imposed, it is a means of grace, and is followed by repentance.

2. If this repentance is genuine, the offender is humiliated under a sense of sin, confesses his fault, and seeks the forgiveness of the Church.

3. No length of time is fixed over which this course of penitence is to extend.

4. So soon as the penitent admits his guilt and expresses sorrow, it then becomes the duty of the Church to forgive, to comfort, and to readmit him to its fellowship (2 Cor. ii. 6–8; Gal. vi. 1).

5. The Church and its rulers have no power to forgive sin, in so far as sin is committed against God. Guilt in that sense can be pardoned by God only. Any man, however, can forgive a sin, in so far as that sin has been committed against himself (Luke xvii. 4). But if the offence, being gross and notorious, has brought scandal on the congregation, and has brought down upon the offender expulsion from the society, then the Church, acting through its rulers, has power on his repentance to forgive the sin in so far as it was committed against itself, and, by the law of Christ, is under obligation to do so. This is the forgiveness spoken of in 2 Cor. ii. 10; it is the "loosing," that is, the setting free the chain in order to open the door spoken of in Matt. xviii. 18; and it is the remission or forgiveness mentioned in John xx. 23: "Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them." To convey the Church's forgiveness to a penitent on behalf of the members, is the only kind of absolution competent to Church officers.

6. Though this power was granted in the first instance to Peter and to his fellow-apostles, it would be a mistake to suppose that the right to exclude or to restore was limited to apostles. The Corinthians were to put away the incestuous person from among them. Titus was to reject the heretic after the first and second admonition. The spiritual among the Galatians were to restore those who had been overtaken in a fault; and the Corinthians were to restore the penitent, lest "such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow."

7. What is thus done by Church rulers in obedience to the command of the Lord, and with the knowledge and concurrence of the Church, is ratified above: "What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven:

and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

On the ground of these facts embodied in the word of God, or deduced therefrom, we reach this general principle, that *every local Church is by divine right vested with a self-governing and self-purifying power, to be exerted in accordance with the law of Christ, and that its rulers, acting on its behalf and with its consent, have divine authority to admit members, to edify and judge brethren, to expel offenders, to restore penitents, and to carry out, in accordance with divine directions, the general objects for which the Church was founded.*

To affirm this, is little more than to say of the Church what is true of any voluntary society, constituted in a legal and regular manner, that it has power to receive into its membership those who are willing to comply, and power to exclude those by whom its rules are broken. Exclusion in neither case strips a man of any privilege except that which membership in the society confers.

ADVANTAGES AND DANGERS.

This self-purifying power, with which God has endowed the Church, and which it exercises through its officers, needs to be very cautiously used. But if used discreetly, it is a potent instrument for the reformation and restraint of those disposed to sin. It is itself a condemnation of sin, and a strong encouragement to purity of life. Without some such authority vested in its rulers, the Church might slip away from control, and sink down into a state of hopeless corruption. Church members suspected of evil, instead of being put under the ban of exclusion in any capricious way, can claim the privilege of having their case inquired into by an impartial tribunal and a decision pronounced. The exercise of this power so as to make it in reality a means of grace, and thus to advance the cause of Christ, requires a high degree of wisdom and of firmness combined with gentleness on the part of rulers, and of humility, self-restraint, and submission on the part of Church members.

On the other hand, no power is more subject to abuse, and where untenderly or unwisely used, it is sure to do harm.

1. The eldership may be so lax and indulgent, as without intending any hurt, they may palliate and make light of sin. In that case the Church has need to mourn (1 Cor. v. 2).

2. On the other hand, they may be so strict and severe, as to excite opposition, drive men into rebellion, and scatter the Church. This was the mistake of the Montanists. "They shut the church door," says Jerome, "at almost every offence."

3. The power is always unwisely and improperly used, when minor offences are made the subject of Church discipline, personal pique or passion gratified, or civil penalties are virtually imposed.

4. Even a very slight exercise of it is in some states of society wrongly regarded as tyranny and persecution; while, on the other hand, the odium attaching to its exercise is often improperly concentrated on the head of some individual, and this often leads to its neglect.

5. People cannot be induced to study carefully in the Scriptures its true nature and object; hence it is often misunderstood, and as a means of grace and reformation it is sometimes undervalued even by Church members.

6. Persons expelled from the Christian society are not always improved, but rather hardened in heart; and often animated by an evil spirit, or misled by ignorance or the love of sin, never repent or seek restoration.

7. Sinners whose professions of penitence are insincere, often succeed, it is to be feared, in obtaining restoration to Church fellowship.

8. Some of these are so ignorant as to imagine that their confession of guilt and their public appearance before the Church make some amends for their sin. Persons who regard it in this erroneous light speak of it as "giving satisfaction." Christ alone makes "satisfaction" for sin to God: satisfaction to man is a small matter.

9. The surest method of avoiding mistakes is to have an exact and complete knowledge of what Scripture teaches on the subject.

10. It is better to decline pronouncing excommunication, if we find by experience that the exercise of the power, instead

of inducing to repentance, leads to hardness of heart and to the destruction of souls.

To rule in the Church of God, however honourable the position, is often to discharge an unpleasant and painful duty. Christian people ought to lighten the burden as much as possible, by lending their moral support to the action of the rulers, acting on the admonitions contained in Heb. xiii. 17 and 1 Thess. v. 13, and by treating persons excluded from Church fellowship after the manner which the Scripture directs.

CHAPTER IX.—GIVING AND RECEIVING.

EVIDENCE OF SCRIPTURE.

And he [Abraham] gave him [Melchizedek] a tenth of all.—Gen. xiv. 20.

Of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.—Gen. xxviii. 22.

Thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather the fallen fruit of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and for the stranger.—Lev. xix. 10.

All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord.—Lev. xxvii. 30.

The tithe of the children of Israel which they offer as an heave-offering unto the Lord, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance. —Lev. xviii. 24.

Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon thy land.—Deut. xii. 19.

The poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt surely open thine hand unto thy brother, to thy needy, and to thy poor in thy land.—Deut. xv. 11.

Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in the day of evil.—Ps. xli. 1.

The kings of Tarshish and the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.—Ps. lxxii. 10.

Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase.—Prov. iii. 9.

Strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee.—Isa. lx. 10.

Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God; ye shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.—Isa. lxi. 6.

Let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the free-will offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.—Ezra i. 4.

Moreover I make a decree what ye shall do to these elders of the Jews for the building of this house of God: that of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river, expenses be given with all diligence unto these men, that they be not hindered. And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for burnt-offerings to the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the word of the priests which are at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail: that they may offer sacrifices of sweet savour unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and of his sons.—Ezra vi. 8–10.

Forasmuch as thou art sent of the king and his seven counsellors, to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God which is in thine hand; and to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his counsellors have freely offered unto the God of Israel, whose habitation is in Jerusalem, and all the silver and gold that thou shalt find in all the province of Babylon, with the free-will offering of the people, and of the priests, offering willingly for the house of their God which is in Jerusalem; therefore thou shalt with all diligence buy with this money bullocks, rams, lambs, with their meal-offerings and their drink-offerings, and shalt offer them upon the altar of the house of your God which is in Jerusalem. And whatsoever shall seem good to thee and to thy brethren to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, that do ye after the will of your God. . . . And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God, which thou shalt have occasion to bestow, bestow it out of the king's treasure house. And I, even I Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers, which are beyond the river, that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, it be done with all diligence unto an hundred talents of silver, and to an hundred measures of wheat, and to an hundred baths of wine, and to an hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribing how much. Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be done exactly for the house of the God of heaven; for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons? Also we certify you, that touching any of the priests and Levites, the singers, porters, Nethinim, or servants of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose tribute, custom, or toll, upon them.—Ezra vii. 14–24.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.—Ezra vii. 27.

Bring ye the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house.—Mal. iii. 8.

Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.—Matt. v. 42.

The labourer is worthy of his food.—Matt. x. 10.

Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.—Matt. x. 42.

The labourer is worthy of his hire.—Luke x. 7.

Sell that ye have, and give alms; make for yourselves purses which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not.—Luke xii. 33.

If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?—Luke xvi. 11.

I fast twice in the week: I give tithes of all that I get.—Luke xviii. 12.

All that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need.—Acts ii. 44, 45.

Neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need. And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, Son of exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race, having a field, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.—Acts iv. 34–37.

The disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judea: which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.—Acts xi. 29, 30.

Ye yourselves know, that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. In all things I gave you an example, how that so labouring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He Himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.—Acts xx. 34, 35.

Communicating to the necessities of the saints; given to hospitality.—Rom. xii. 13.

Owe no man anything, save to love one another.—Rom. xiii. 8.

Have we no right to eat and to drink? Have we no right to lead about a wife that is a believer, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, have we not a right to forbear working? What soldier ever serveth at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk

of the flock? Do I speak these things after the manner of men? or saith not the law also the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. Is it for the oxen that God careth, or saith He it altogether for our sake? Yea, for our sake it was written: because he that ploweth ought to plow in hope, and he that thresheth, to thresh in hope of partaking. If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things? If others partake of this right over you, do not we yet more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right; but we bear all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. Know ye not that they which minister about sacred things eat of the things of the temple, and they which wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar? Even so did the Lord ordain that they which proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel.—1 Cor. ix. 4–14.

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve by letters, them will I send to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem.—1 Cor. xvi. 1–3.

We make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia . . . for according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord. . . . See that ye abound in this grace also. . . . For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich. . . . But now complete the doing also; that as there was the readiness to will, so there may be the completion also out of your ability. For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not.—2 Cor. viii. 1–12.

As touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you, for I know your readiness . . . and your zeal hath stirred up very many of them.—2 Cor. ix. 1, 2.

He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all-sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work.—2 Cor. ix. 6–8.

They would that we should remember the poor; which very thing I was also zealous to do.—Gal. ii. 10.

Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.—Gal. vi. 6.

Ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving, but ye only; for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need. Not that I seek for the gift; but I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account. But I have all things, and abound: I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. —Phil. iv. 15–18.

Neither did we eat bread for nought at any man's hand, but in labour and travail, working night and day, that we might not burden any of you: not because we have not the right, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you, that ye should imitate us.—2 Thess. iii. 8, 9.

If any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.—1 Tim. v. 8.

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and in teaching. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his hire.—1 Tim. v. 17, 18.

The sons of Levi, that receive the priest's office, have commandment to take tithes of the people.—Heb. vii. 5.

Through Abraham, even Levi, who receiveth tithes, hath paid tithes.—Heb. vii. 9.

Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according unto God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.—1 Pet. v. 2.

DISCUSSION OF THE EVIDENCE.

Distinctly condemning selfishness in its various forms, Christianity enjoins upon all its adherents self-sacrifice and generosity, and presents for our imitation the example of the Lord. "Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor." "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

Consistently with the duty which they owe to their own families (1 Tim. v. 8) and the obligations which they owe to others (Rom. xiii. 8)—passages which impose needful and important limits on private generosity—Christians may, to

any good cause, be as liberal as their heart prompts and their means enable them.

In the fervour of their first love, the members of the Church at Jerusalem sold their possessions, and laid the price at the apostles' feet for distribution among those in need. Ananias was not punished for declining to do this; his offence was that he kept back a part while he professed to give all. A Christian was not bound to surrender all, though it is obvious that many did so: but he was expected to act consistently with his profession. "Whiles it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power?" This shows that Christians had complete control over their property, and that if, in any case, they handed it all over to the Church fund, it was on their part a purely voluntary act; and we cannot gather that the example of Jerusalem was followed by any other Church, either of the apostolic or subsequent ages. If the Church at Jerusalem was a socialistic fraternity, their socialism was different from the socialism of our time. Modern Communists would seize on the property of others, and divide it among themselves; but these ancient apostolic communists took their own property and divided it among others. Modern Communists aim to make the rich poor, acting on the principle of rob and divide; but the Jerusalem communists aimed, so far as they were able, to make the poor rich, acting on the principle, Sell out your own and share with your neighbour. Communism of this kind is never likely to become so popular and general as to cause any practical inconvenience.

In its normal condition, the Church, being a society of men carrying on its operations in the world, and hampered by all the vulgar wants inseparable from the conditions of human existence, cannot in ordinary cases perform without money the work which it is commissioned to discharge. This money Christians are to contribute. Deriving all they possess from God, and being themselves stewards of His bounty, they are called upon, in proportion to their ability, to supply the means necessary to support the operations of the Church.

The salvation of the gospel comes to the sinner who accepts it "without money;" that is, men cannot pay, and are not asked to pay, for what itself is the free gift of God, and

cannot be purchased. But money is needed to maintain those who at home labour in word and teaching, or who carry the gospel to the world, and to help such Christians as, owing to circumstances against which they cannot guard, are borne down by poverty and wretchedness.

In ancient Jewish times, long before Christianity made its appearance, a legal provision in the tithes and offerings was made for the maintenance of the priests and Levites. After the Jewish system had been broken up, and those returned from the captivity were attempting to restore what had been thrown down, they gratefully accepted assistance from the heathen government of Persia under which they lived,—assistance not only in rebuilding the temple, but in setting up once more the sacrificial worship. It is written among the prophecies declaring the glory of the Church in the last days, that the Gentile nations will lavish their liberality upon her: "the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift;" the "kings of Tarshish and the isles shall bring presents;" "strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee." How far these prophecies and examples justify Christians in availing themselves in modern times of the gifts of kings and governments for religious objects is very much debated. True prophecy is always fulfilled in due time; the particular manner of fulfilment may safely be left to the future to decide. States and princes in the present age seem less disposed to lavish gifts on religion than at any previous period.

There cannot be the slightest doubt of the fact, that the Christian Church throughout the apostolic period drew its support exclusively from the means placed at its disposal by the people. Whether it would have rejected help if offered by a pagan government is a different question, and one that need not here be discussed. The case did not arise in their experience, and men may legitimately differ on the point. But as to the system of Church support actually adopted, there can be no difference. Multitudes gave their personal service to the Lord; some went a warfare at their own expense, and "made the gospel without charge" (1 Cor. ix. 6, 7, 18); and some paid cheerfully for the support of Christian objects. The main objects to which Christian liberality was directed were,—

1. To maintain their local teachers and rulers (1 Cor. ix. 4–14; Gal. vi. 6; 1 Tim. v. 17, 18).

2. To help those who carried the gospel to others (Phil. iv. 15–18; 2 Cor. xi. 9).

3. To relieve the necessities of poor saints (Acts xi. 30; Rom. xii. 13; 1 Cor. xvi. 1–3; 2 Cor. ix. 1–5; Gal. ii. 10).

The system of contribution recommended by Paul to the Churches of Galatia and to the Church of Corinth (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2) had special reference to the poor saints, but is manifestly capable of a wider application. It has been called "storing for God." It describes the duty, "lay by him in store;" the time, "the first day of the week;" "the contributors, "each one of you;" the measure of generosity, "as he may prosper;" and the general object, "the collection for the saints." It is an open question whether the storing was to be at home, or whether the money was to be brought to the Church meeting. The former interpretation would rob us of the testimony of the passage to the public observance of the Lord's day, and Neander uses it for that purpose.[1] But the latter is the more probable, else there was no necessity for naming the first day of the week more than the second; and if every man had stored in his own house, the thing had to be done which Paul forbade—there must have been a collection when he came.

Though the gifts sent from Philippi to Paul when labouring at Thessalonica were prompted no doubt by gratitude for personal service, still they are the first recorded gifts to one labouring outside the Church that contributed, the first gifts to a foreign mission.

The support of the local ministry by the Church in which it labours rests on the clearest grounds. It rests on the general ground involved in the principle, "The workman is worthy of his meat,"—"The labourer is worthy of his hire." The express command is, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." It is of no consequence whether the teacher be permanent or itinerant, whether bishop or evangelist, the expression, "him that teacheth," includes both. Whether the sum paid is a regular salary or a purely voluntary gift, concerns the recipient,

[1] *History of the Planting*, Book iii. 5, p. 159.

no doubt, but it does not affect the general principle laid down by the apostle. It is true that he and Barnabas often forbore their claims to support on those whom they instructed, in order that they might not be burdensome to poor Churches, that they might set their converts an example of industry, and that they might earn something to relieve the necessities of others. But Paul was resolute in his assertion of his right to maintenance, and taught that the support of the gospel by the people is the ordinance of God: "Even so did the Lord ordain that they which proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel." After reasoning out the whole subject in 1 Cor. ix., this is the conclusion that he reaches. The same thing is affirmed of ruling and teaching elders in 1 Tim. v. 17.

Upon the basis of these facts we arrive at this principle—*That it is the ordinance of God that the members of the Church are, in proportion to their means, to contribute to religious and charitable objects, to the support of the ministry, the extension of the gospel, and to the relief of the poor.*

That the ministry in the apostolic age derived their maintenance solely from resources within the Church, proves that connection with the State is not essential to the Church's existence, that the Church can grow and flourish without such help, and that the Church of Christ is not in any true sense the creature of the State. It was persecuted by the State for centuries, and having prospered in spite of persecution, it was then taken under the State's protection. But the actual condition of Church and State relationship presented in the New Testament is not to regulate the relations of Church and State to all time. Nero and Domitian are not worthy models of the civil magistrate in after ages. Still the Church which is not helplessly dependent on the State, which is supported from its own resources, and is free without political impediment to do its work in its own way, is in the most desirable position.

Advantages and Dangers.

1. The grace of liberality, of which these gifts to the cause of God are the product, is very much commended in the Scriptures, and ought to be cultivated like any other. The principle now stated gives constant opportunities for doing so.

2. It enables Christians who, owing to circumstances, cannot take any personal part in the evangelization of the world, to bear a share in the discharge of a work which, though originally enjoined upon the apostles (Matt. xxviii. 18–20), is the common duty of the whole Church.

3. It enables Christians to show sympathy with the poor, and to help them if there is necessity.

4. By the habit of contribution a constant course of religious education is maintained, and the minds of men improved.

5. Systematic storing makes giving an easy matter. If Christians were to act on this plan, and divide with every good cause in proportion to its claims, they would in that case give without grudge to religious and charitable objects, and would not need to be solicited.

6. Constant giving of a portion of a man's earnings to the cause of God is the best means of checking that selfishness and love of the world so apt to grow upon all.

On the contrary, the practice of systematic giving, even to good objects, is attended with dangers against which we must guard. The habit of liberality must not be allowed to diminish the sense of responsibility which lies upon us to see that the object to which we give is really good. Generosity to religious objects is not unlikely to produce the impression on some minds that they have achieved a certain degree of merit, and put God under obligation. Against such mistakes Christians cannot be too watchful. On the other hand, receivers must see that a wasteful expenditure is not encouraged by an excessive liberality.

The present prevailing modes of giving are open to similar dangers, and to this in addition, that the cause of God is starved, in instances not a few, by the narrowness of man. Christianity, to the great discredit of its adherents, is often obliged to have recourse to worldly methods in order to raise funds for good purposes.

It must never be forgotten that money freely given by its owner to any cause that God approves, and given from a right motive and for a right purpose, is in the estimation of Him who searcheth the heart fruit that will abound to our account; it is a cup of cold water given to one of Christ's little ones, and therefore certain to have its reward. But what we give

to man and not to God, or in order to get rid of importunity, or from some defective motive, does not bring us within scope of the promise, and does not entitle us to any recognition from above. Thus it is that, owing to some want in ourselves, we often lose the full benefit of what we give to a good cause.

CHAPTER X.—INTERCOMMUNION AND ASSOCIATION OF CHURCHES.

EVIDENCE OF SCRIPTURE.

City Churches.

1. Jerusalem—

There was a multitude of persons gathered together, about an hundred and twenty.—Acts i. 15.

There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.—Acts ii. 5.

There were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.—Acts ii. 41.

And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness.—Acts ii. 46.

The Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved. —Acts ii. 47.

Many of them that heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be above five thousand.—Acts iv. 4.

Great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things.—Acts v. 11.

They were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.—Acts v. 12.

Believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.—Acts v. 14.

In those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying. —Acts vi. 1.

The twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said.—Acts vi. 2.

The number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.—Acts vi. 7.

There arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad through-

out the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.—Acts viii. 1.

Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison.—Acts viii. 3.

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, was multiplied.—Acts ix. 31.

The report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem.—Acts xi. 22.

Herod the king put forth his hand to afflict certain of the church. —Acts xii. 1.

Peter therefore was kept in the prison; but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him.—Acts xii. 5.

He came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together and were praying.—Acts xii. 12.

But the word of God grew and multiplied.—Acts xii. 24.

It seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men out of their company and send them to Antioch.—Acts xv. 22.

When he had landed at Cæsarea, he went up and saluted the church, and went down to Antioch.—Acts xviii. 22.

The day following, Paul went in with us unto James, and all the elders were present.—Acts xxi. 18.

Thou seest, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of them which have believed.—Acts xxi. 20.

2. Ephesus—

He entered into the synagogue and spake boldly for the space of three months.—Acts xix. 8.

He separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for the space of two years, so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord.—Acts xix. 9, 10.

Many also of them that had believed came, confessing and declaring their deeds.—Acts xix. 18.

So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed.—Acts xix. 20.

Not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people. — Acts xix. 26.

From Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church.—Acts xx. 17.

Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops.—Acts xx. 28.

By the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears.—Acts xx. 31.

If any woman that believeth hath widows, let her relieve them, and let not the church be burdened.—1 Tim. v. 16.

To the angel of the church in Ephesus.—Rev. ii. 1.

3. Corinth—

Many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. And the Lord said unto Paul in the night . . . I have much people in this city. And he dwelt there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.—Acts xviii. 8–11.

Gaius my host, and of the whole church, saluteth you.—Rom. xvi. 23.

Paul . . . unto the church of God which is at Corinth.—1 Cor. i. 2.

First of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that divisions exist among you, and I partly believe it.—1 Cor. xi. 18.

When therefore ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's Supper; for in your eating, each one taketh before other his own supper.—1 Cor. xi. 20.

Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and put them to shame that have not?—1 Cor. xi. 22.

If, therefore, the whole church be assembled together, and all speak with tongues.—1 Cor. xiv. 23.

Let the women keep silence in the churches.—1 Cor. xiv. 34.

It is shameful for a woman to speak in the church.—1 Cor. xiv. 35.

Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in the whole of Achaia.—2 Cor. i. 1.

4. Antioch—

A great number that believed turned unto the Lord.—Acts xi. 21.

Much people was added unto the Lord.—Acts xi. 24.

For a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people.—Acts xi. 26.

There were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers.—Acts xiii. 1.

They, therefore, being brought on their way by the church, passed through both Phœnicia and Samaria.—Acts xv. 3.

5. The church of the Thessalonians.—1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1.

6. The church in Laodicea.—Rev. iii. 14.

7. The church that is at Cenchrea.—Rom. xvi. 1.
8. The church in Smyrna.—Rev. ii. 8.
9. The church in Pergamum.—Rev. ii. 12.
10. The church in Thyatira.—Rev. ii. 18.
11. The church in Sardis.—Rev. iii. 1.
12. The church in Philadelphia.—Rev. iii. 7.

The Church in the House.

Jerusalem.—He came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together, and were praying.—Acts xii. 12.

Ephesus.—Aquila and Prisca salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.—1 Cor. xvi. 19.

Laodicea.—Salute the brethren that are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church that is in their house.—Col. iv. 15.

Colossæ.—Paul . . . to Philemon . . . and to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house.—Philem. 2.

Rome.—Salute Prisca and Aquila, my fellow-workers in Christ . . . and the church that is in their house.—Rom. xvi. 5.

The Provincial Churches.

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified.—Acts ix. 31.

All the churches of the Gentiles.—Rom. xvi. 4.

All the churches of Christ salute you.—Rom. xvi. 20.

The churches of Galatia.—Gal. i. 2; 1 Cor. xvi. 1.

The churches of Asia salute you.—1 Cor. xvi. 19.

The grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia.—2 Cor. viii. 1.

The churches of Judea, which were in Christ.—Gal. i. 22.

John to the seven churches which are in Asia.—Rev. i. 4.

DISCUSSION OF THE EVIDENCE.

Let it be observed, that however numerous the Christians of a city, they are always, in every instance without exception, spoken of as the ἐκκλησία — the Church, the congregation of the city. They are so designated, because they were in the habit of meeting as one assembly. But the Christians residing at different points over a province could never meet as one

assembly; they therefore are not designated *the Church*, but *the Churches* of the province. To this fact Acts ix. 31, which will afterwards be noticed, is the only exception; in every other case the Christians of a province meeting in separate worshipping assemblies are called the Churches. Had the Christians of a city been marked off into distinct worshipping congregations, they would have been called *Churches* also. That this is not done, but that the Christians of each city, however numerous, constitute the *ecclesia* or Church, is our first argument that in the apostolic age there was only one Church in each town.

The apostles, in making disciples of the nations, had their attention mainly turned to the great centres of population. From the great cities the gospel spread forth and fastened on the rural districts. Twelve towns are named in the New Testament, each of which had a Church; but none of them had Churches. Of these, Jerusalem, "the Church from which every Church had its origin," as Irenæus says, was the most numerous; and had there been two Churches in any town in the apostolic age, without doubt it must have been there.

Look at the terms in which the circumstances of that Church are described. It is quite true that at the election of Matthias there were present 120; that 3000 were added at the first Pentecost; that 5000 are spoken of in Acts iv. 4; and that "many thousands" are spoken of in xxi. 20. This language proves, we admit, a very numerous Church—a result which might be expected in a town where the whole college of apostles laboured for seven years (30–37 A.D.). But various other facts in all fairness ought to be considered. The 3000 converted on the day of Pentecost consisted in a very large proportion of foreign Jews, who came from the countries named in Acts ii. to attend the feast, and who, when the brief period of their sojourn was over, would naturally go back to their distant homes. It is not impossible that all of their number permanently resident in the city are included in the 5000 mentioned in Acts iv. 4—"The number of the men *came to be* about five thousand." Further, the whole Church, the apostles excepted, was scattered in the persecution which arose about Stephen, and many of them, like Philip the evangelist, never returned, but may have settled

permanently in other places (Acts xxi. 8). The Church suffered in another persecution, in which Herod slew James and imprisoned Peter (Acts xii.), and this persecution was followed by a famine; the tendency of both being to thin the population and to drive Christians as well as others away. The myriads of Christians mentioned by James (Acts xxi. 20) as all zealous of the law, were not necessarily inhabitants of Jerusalem, but possibly country Jews, recently converted to Christianity, and attached to their old customs and opinions, and who came up from the towns and villages of Judea to attend the Jewish solemnities in the metropolis.

We are entitled to take these facts into account when estimating the magnitude of the Church at Jerusalem; yet enough remains to prove that it was much the most numerous of the apostolic Churches. Let us attend to the circumstances affirmed of it, in which consists our second argument, that there was at the time only one Church in each city.

The first fact is the multitude of 120 gathered together in Jerusalem at the election of Matthias. On the day of Pentecost there were "added unto them" about 3000 souls. From Acts ii. 46 we learn that they continued stedfastly "with *one accord* in the temple," which could scarcely be said if they acted as separate congregations. Additions were made to them from day to day (ii. 47), so that their number came to be 5000. In chap. v. 11 they are spoken of as "the whole Church." Again, they all meet "with one accord" in Solomon's porch (ver. 12). Multitudes of men and women were added to the Lord (ver. 14), and, of course, to the local Church. It was in the days when "the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly" that the murmuring arose, and that to provide a remedy the twelve called "the multitude of the disciples unto them." The persecution that arose about Stephen was against "the Church." Even so late in the apostolic history as Acts xviii. 22, Paul at the end of his second missionary journey goes up from Cæsarea and salutes the Church. The impression left by the whole history is, that while the believers at Jerusalem were numerous beyond the precedent of any other city, yet they all constituted a unity, and were members of the same congregation; nor is there the slightest hint given in the story that there were two Churches in the great city. If one

Church only can be found in Jerusalem, it is in vain we look for more at Ephesus, Corinth, or Antioch.

That difficulties, some of considerable weight, lie against this view of the case, cannot be denied; but all of them together do not amount to an impossibility, and therefore do not outweigh the substantial evidence by which we support the proposition, that there was only one Church in any city throughout the apostolic age.

Some think that the numbers made it impossible that so great a multitude should act together as the one Church. Inconvenient, we admit: impossible, we deny. The greatest number mentioned in connection with the local Church of Jerusalem is only 5000—a number which, if ever exceeded, was only for a short time before the persecution. Allowing the whole number of adults to have been 10,000, the whole could have been accommodated with ease within the temple area, or in the open air. A much larger assembly of worshippers standing on their feet might be brought within the sound of the human voice. Nor was it necessary, except on extraordinary occasions, that all should come together at the same time. With twelve apostles at its head the Church could hold different diets for worship, and it was not necessary that at each service every Church member should be present. We read how that in Antioch in Pisidia, on one occasion, "almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God" (Acts xiii. 44). What really occurred on one occasion is at least possible at other times and in other places.

It has sometimes been supposed that the different *languages* spoken by those converted on the day of Pentecost made it necessary for edification that there should be different Churches, in which each would hear a service in his own tongue. But we have no reason to think that the persons from all nations present at the first Pentecost were permanent residents, and needed separate Churches for their instruction. It was only at the great feast that strangers and foreigners came up to the city in great numbers: and on such occasions, if necessary, arrangements could be made for their instruction, similar to those at great popular meetings in the London parks, when the multitude is addressed from different platforms erected at a distance from each other.

That *minor meetings* were held in Jerusalem by Christians for prayer and mutual edification, is clearly indicated. In their circumstances it was almost a case of necessity, if Christianity was to grow and thrive. The fact is suggested by the words—"Every day in the temple and *at home* they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ." It is also in evidence, that on the night when Peter was delivered from prison by the angel, many were assembled for prayer in at least one private dwelling of the city, and that, too, when James and the brethren were not present (Acts xii. 12, 17). Yet the fact remains, that all the Christians of the city are repeatedly spoken of as the *Church* at Jerusalem. The case has its parallel in this other fact, that an ordinary congregation now may have five or six sectional meetings for prayer and reading the Scriptures within its bounds and in connection with it.

If one of these sectional meetings was held statedly in some particular place, it would naturally be called an *ecclesia* or congregation, no less than the larger congregation of which it made a part. This would make necessary the use of some epithet to distinguish the one from the other. The laws of language make this imperative; the penalty of transgression in this case being that the speaker who should fail to make the distinction would not be understood. Even two men of the same name, should they live near each other, must for this reason be distinguished by some epithet derived from age, office, position, or title. In the case under consideration, the New Testament writers make the necessary distinction. The Christians of a city constitute the Church of the city, because they assemble from time to time, and are thus regarded as constituting the one congregation; but a portion of the main body occasionally or statedly meeting for worship in a private dwelling are "the Church in the house." The word *ecclesia* has exactly the same meaning here as in other places, but the epithet added—"in the house," limits it to that portion of the city congregation which meets at the place specified.

The use of the epithet is to prevent us from confounding the sectional meeting of Christians with the general meeting assembling in the same town. The four instances of its occurrence in the New Testament show this clearly. At

Ephesus, Aquila and Prisca have "a Church in their house," yet in the same town there is a well-known body constituting the Church of Ephesus, and the elders are regarded as having charge, not of the flocks, but of the "flock" (Acts xx. 17, 28). At Laodicea, Nymphas had "a Church in the house," and yet there was over and above "the Church of Laodicea" (Rev. iii. 14). Philemon had a Church in his house at Colossæ, and Aquila and Prisca had another in their house at Rome; yet there is no doubt that a general Church, though not expressly named, must have existed at the time in each of these cities. The two Epistles of Paul, addressed, one to the Colossians, the other to the Romans, would not permit us to think otherwise. Nor is "the Church in the house," as some suppose, a figurative expression merely denoting a Christian family, for it must be remembered that in Scripture the family is marked off by a name of its own, the "household of Lydia," the "household" of Stephanas, the "household" of Onesiphorus, and so on. The fact, therefore, of an epithet being in use to distinguish a sectional meeting from the general body of Christians in a town, proves that although all the Christians of the place constituted the one organized Church with its officers and ordinances, the members, for convenience' sake, were accustomed to hold minor and subordinate meetings, that is, assemblies or Churches in private dwellings for worship and edification.

The radical meaning of *ecclesia* (congregation) is not forgotten when the inspired writer speaks of the Christians resident in a province. He calls them *Churches* in the plural, because they meet in separate congregations, and meeting all in one congregation is impossible. The only exception to this practice is Acts ix. 31, where we read of "the *Church*," not Churches, "throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria." But the exception is only apparent. This is an example of the use of the word in its widest and most general sense, as including the Church of Christ on earth—the aggregate congregation of the people of God. The peculiarity of the occurrence of the word in the passage referred to is that the word is there limited by the context to that portion of the Church of Christ resident in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee.

We cannot bring ourselves to think that this fact was ever

intended to be a precedent for after times, when the whole population of many a large city should profess the faith, and make their meeting for worship in the same assembly very inconvenient, even if possible. But the fact of there being only one Church in each city in the first century needs to be known, in order to account for changes which, in the third century and after, developed in the constitution of the Church. However undesirable such an arrangement may now be for large cities, we can easily imagine that at a time when Christians were a poor and feeble minority, encircled on all sides by a surging tide of hostile Jews and pagans, it may have had some advantages. It kindled in their meetings the enthusiasm of numbers. It welded all the followers of Christ in that locality in a solid mass, into a common brotherhood under a common authority. Discipline in these circumstances meant something; a bold and obstinate sinner, expelled from the Church, was literally forced out into the kingdom of Satan, and expelled from Christian society altogether—a position more likely to lead him to reflection and repentance. Besides, it gave every member of the local church the opportunity of profiting by the best gifts that the place could afford.

COMMUNION OF CHURCHES.

As the gospel spread, Churches of a similar kind were planted in every large city of the empire, and from the city the faith was carried to the towns and villages around. Every Church regarded every new Church planted as only another part of itself, and its members as brethren and sisters in the faith. Intercourse and bonds of connection were maintained among these local societies in a variety of ways, all serving to show that, though often distant from each other, they formed the one great society and association. The bond of this union was love, and in their case love showed itself in such ways as the following:—

1. In having *the same spiritual teachers and guides in common.*

> The brethren appointed that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.—Acts xv. 2.

Having gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle; and when they had read it, they rejoiced for the consolation.—Acts xv. 30, 31.

My fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life laid down their own necks; unto whom not only I give thanks, but all the churches of the Gentiles.—Rom. xvi. 4.

Even as I teach everywhere in every church.—1 Cor. iv. 17.

Beside those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches.—2 Cor. xi. 28.

When this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea.—Col. iv. 16.

The elders, therefore, among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder. —1 Pet. v. 1.

From these passages it appears that all the Christians of that age were under the instruction and guidance of the apostles and elders; the apostles having the care of all, and the elders being the rulers and teachers in the particular Church in which they were appointed.

2. *Ordinances and customs in common.*

And so ordain I in all the churches.—1 Cor. vii. 17.

We have no such custom, neither the churches of God.—1 Cor. xi. 16.

God is not a God of confusion, but of peace; as in all the churches of the saints.—1 Cor. xiv. 33.

Concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so do ye.—1 Cor. xvi. 1.

From these passages we learn that the same ordinances, customs, and order were common to all the Churches.

3. *They supported the preaching of the gospel among each other.*

The brethren, when they came from Macedonia, supplied the measure of my want.—2 Cor. xi. 9.

Even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need.—Phil. iv. 16.

Judging from what is said by Paul, the Philippian Church was more liberal in discharge of this common duty than any of the others.

4. *They contributed to the relief of each other's wants.*

The disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judea.—Acts xi. 29.

It hath been the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem.—Rom. xv. 26.

Whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it.—1 Cor. xii. 26.

Your abundance being a supply at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want; that there may be equality.—2 Cor. viii. 14.

Only they would that we should remember the poor; which very thing I was also zealous to do.—Gal. ii. 10.

These passages show how the Churches of that time were all united in the bond of common sympathy and help.

5. *Common fellowship.*

When he was minded to pass over into Achaia, the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him.—Acts xviii. 27.

I commend unto you Phœbe our sister, . . . that ye receive her in the Lord, worthily of the saints, and that ye assist her in whatever matter she may have need of you.—Rom. xvi. 1, 2.

Need we, as do some, epistles of commendation to you or from you?—2 Cor. iii. 1.

Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, . . . if he come unto you, receive him.—Col. iv. 10.

From such passages it is evident that reception of a member into one Church, on proper credentials being presented, secured reception into any of the others.

6. *They addressed each other letters, and sent salutations.*

Salute the church that is in their house.—Rom. xvi. 5.

All the churches of Christ salute you.—Rom. xvi. 16.

The churches of Asia salute you.—1 Cor. xvi. 19.

All the brethren which are with me unto the churches of Galatia. —Gal. i. 2.

7. *Common representatives.*

Who was also appointed by the churches to travel with us in the matter of this grace.—2 Cor. viii. 19.

From these cases of intercommunion and correspondence, it is evident that all Christians, though enrolled in separate congregations, owing to the inevitable conditions of time and space, are, notwithstanding, the members of one great religious body, whose parts are bound together by ties of faith and love and sympathy; that "The whole Church of Christ is but one, made up of the collection and aggregation of all who are called out of the world by the preaching of the word, to profess the faith of Christ unto the unity thereof."[1] The New Testament Churches had all the same origin, the same faith and worship and order, the same customs, the same interests, and the same ends. Nothing, therefore, was more natural than that they should regard each other as only different parts of the one great aggregate body. To consult with each other and take common action—to co-operate with and to aid one another—was the necessary result of this intimate relationship. Each Church, if it would serve the end of its existence, must associate with other Churches of Christ in the same locality. "No Church, therefore," says Dr. Owen, "is so independent, as that it can always and in all cases observe the duties it owes unto the Lord Christ and the Church catholic, by all those powers which it is able to act in itself distinctly, without conjunction with others. And the Church that confines its duty unto the acts of its own assemblies, cuts itself off from the external communion of the Church catholic; nor will it be safe for any man to commit the conduct of his soul to such a Church."[2]

Association, as we have seen, is a scriptural principle. Individual believers associate to form the *local Church*. The elders of a Church associate to form the *presbytery*. The *Church* universal is the aggregate association of all local Churches. For separate congregations and their rulers associating together for consultation and government, we have a clear precedent in the 15th of Acts, which we shall notice more in detail in the next chapter. Here we need only observe, that even the light of nature teaches us that a number of Churches all working harmoniously can accomplish a kind of service for Christ, that one acting alone may be too

[1] *Answer of the Assembly of Divines*, p. 56.
[2] *Gospel Church*, chap. xi. p. 250.

weak to accomplish. The principle is sanctioned by the general Scripture rule, that in a multitude of counsellors there is safety; and that there are times when every Church stands in need of advice and help from others of its class. Necessity suggests such association; Churches cannot avoid coming into contact with States and governments, but the influence of a single congregation with the civil rulers is as nothing compared with a combination of Churches, all under common advice, and all acting together. There are acts needing to be done, but which individual Churches are not able to do,—the examination of candidates for the ministry,—the examination of evidence which may perhaps furnish a ground for excommunication,—or the settlement of questions which may come up in dispute between two contiguous Churches; matters of this kind require to be considered by the rulers of the nearest Churches acting together. Differences may arise between a Church and its rulers, which may most conveniently be settled by brethren outside the Church who have authority to interpose. Errors may appear in different Churches making it necessary for their rulers to consult, and examine, and condemn them. Churches are not under compulsion to associate, even as individuals cannot be compelled to enter into the local Church without their own consent. But there is much in their common faith and principles, in their close relationship to the nearest Churches, in their common environment by hostile elements, in their need of common counsel and help, that makes it desirable that the nearest Churches should associate and act together as a united body in all public matters.

There is indeed a sense in which all the New Testament Churches were independent of each other; that is, each had a distinct sphere of work within its own locality; each had its own staff of officers; each was free to manage the business that Christ assigned to it; and no one of them was made subject to the jurisdiction of any other Church whatever. But they were not independent in the sense that the one might act in public or common matters without regard to the welfare of others, or that they believed and worshipped in different ways, or that each Church was cut off from all ecclesiastical connection with other Churches, or that they

were governed by a different supreme authority. For their own convenience they worshipped apart, each in its own locality; but all these different societies constituted a greater society—a confederation of little States all combined together in the one great spiritual kingdom.

From the facts now stated we derive the principle of INTERCOMMUNION AND ASSOCIATION OF CHURCHES; namely, that *the Churches of the apostolic age were so united to each other by bonds of faith and love and sympathy, as in reality to constitute one universal Church,—an aggregate of believers,—the different parts of which were kept asunder only by the conditions attached to human life.* From this principle, and especially from the scriptural facts on which the principle is founded, we draw this important inference, on which the authority of the district presbytery or synod depends, that—

"When many congregations do mutually agree, the elders of their several congregations should join by mutual advice, counsel, and authority of elders to manage all matters of common concernment, difficulty, etc., among themselves; all these thus joined in a body are an eldership to those congregations, and each one doth the acts of elders in the presbytery to those congregations for which they are thus associated." [1]

Association, whether of Churches or of rulers, is a scriptural principle. The association of elders in the government of a local Church, that is, the congregational presbytery, is a divine institution; the association of the rulers of different congregations for managing matters in common, that is, the district presbytery, is simply a matter of agreement and consent, but is the outcome of a principle which has received divine sanction again and again.

There is no large number of Churches found anywhere that do not understand the advantage of associating and acting

[1] *Answer to Reasons of the Dissenting Brethren*, p. 63. Dr. Thornwell draws another inference: "The visible Church is one body consisting of many members; and as the motions of the hand, the head, the foot, are the motions of the man, so the healthful and regular action of any single congregation is the action of the universal Church; the voice of a part, properly expressed, is the voice of the whole. He who is called by a single congregation is called by the entire Church; he who is supported by a single congregation is supported by the entire Church. . . . Every pastor is the minister of the whole." *Works*, vol. iv. p. 39.

together for the common good. Some, indeed, object to interference, and refuse to allow any association of rulers to exercise authority and jurisdiction over the associated Churches; but none in modern times, so far as we know, take exception to the association of Churches.[1] Its advantages are obvious:—

1. The union of many Churches in any great combination imparts confidence and increases strength, inspiring Churches and individuals with enthusiasm, and making them feel that they are not alone.

2. Each local Church, knowing that it is only a unit of a great society or brotherhood to which other similar units belong, feels that it can count upon giving or receiving, as the occasion demands, sympathy, encouragement, help.

3. The moral force thus created imposes a needful check on the hostility of a wicked world, and, if wisely directed, is an influence for good among men. On the other hand, if abused, it may become an evil. Strength becomes a curse if it foster pride, encourage ecclesiastical assumption, stimulate persecution, or is used to promote any evil end. But there is no necessity why ecclesiastical strength should be devoted to any but good ends.

The scriptural and useful principle of *association* is much strengthened by the development of the presbytery into a series of presbyteries, rising above each other in the extent of their jurisdiction, and binding all the Churches under their care into a firm and compact unity. It is, on the other hand, immensely weakened by self-will and disobedience on the part of individual rulers and Churches, and by members running off into schisms and needless separations. Division without sufficient cause produces ill-feeling among Christians, and checks the interest and sympathy which the Churches of Christ over the world would otherwise feel in the welfare of each other.

[1] "In every county in England there are associations or unions of Congregational Churches, several of which were organized in their present form before the close of the last century. These associations are perfectly voluntary. No Congregational Church is obliged to belong to them, or to contribute to their funds. Once or twice a year the ministers and elected representatives of the associated Churches meet in one of the towns of the county for the consideration of their common interests." Dale's *Manual*, iv. 2, 3.

CHAPTER XI.—SYNODICAL JURISDICTION.

SCRIPTURE EVIDENCE.

And certain men came down from Judæa, and taught the brethren, saying, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved. And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them, the brethren appointed that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. They therefore, being brought on their way by the church, passed through both Phœnicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church and the apostles and the elders, and they rehearsed all things that God had done with them. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, It is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider of this matter. And when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they. And all the multitude kept silence; and they hearkened unto Barnabas and Paul, rehearsing what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Brethren, hearken unto me: Symeon hath rehearsed how first God did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After these things I will return, and I will build again the

tabernacle of David, which is fallen; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from the beginning of the world. Wherefore my judgment is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles turn to God; but that we write unto them, that they abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood. For Moses, from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath. Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men out of their company and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas called Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: and they wrote thus by them, The apostles and the elder brethren unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting: Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment; it seemed good unto us, having come to one accord, to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also shall tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well. So they, when they were dismissed, came down to Antioch; and having gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle. And when they had read it, they rejoiced for the consolation. And Judas and Silas, being themselves also prophets, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.—Acts xv. 1–32.

And as they went on their way through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, which had been ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem.—Acts xvi. 4.

So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.—Acts xvi. 5.

IMPORT OF THE EVIDENCE.

Let us here notice the facts so plainly set forth in this portion of the word of God. They are as follow:—

1. Certain men who came down from Judæa taught the brethren at Antioch, most of whom were Gentiles, the false doctrine that circumcision is essential to salvation (ver. 1).

2. This doctrine was opposed by Paul and Barnabas, the result of which was that considerable dissension arose in the Church (ver. 2).

3. It was, of course, competent to the Church at Antioch to settle a matter which had arisen within its own borders, but when it failed to do so, there was a constitutional remedy; the question in dispute was referred for decision to a tribunal outside that Church within whose bounds the dissension arose (ver. 2).

4. This tribunal did not consist of any single person, whether apostle, apostolic delegate, or learned layman, but of a body of ecclesiastical rulers (ver. 2)—the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.

5. Before this tribunal, Paul and Barnabas and others were appointed to lay the case (ver. 2).

6. When the commissioners or deputies from Antioch reached Jerusalem, the question in dispute took a broader shape than before, in consequence of certain Pharisees who believed taking sides with the false teachers, and maintaining that it was necessary, not only to circumcise the Gentile converts, but to teach them to keep the law of Moses (ver. 5). By this we understand the civil and ceremonial parts of the law; for the moral portion, having its roots in the law of nature, is held by all Christians to be of universal obligation.

7. If the design of Divine Providence in permitting all this to happen had merely been to supply an inspired answer to a question of doctrine, the Apostle Paul could have pronounced such a decision at Antioch so as to avoid a long and expensive journey to Jerusalem. In that case the apostles would not have required to meet and deliberate, and still less to associate with themselves uninspired men. The decision of any inspired man upon the subject would have been decisive and final (ver. 6).

8. Though they might have done so, the apostles did not decide either by their own personal authority or by any special revelation. On the contrary, they met with the elders to consider the subject, and both apostles and elders

deliberated publicly in presence of the Church (vers. 6, 7, 12, 22). This was done with great propriety, because it was a matter of public interest, and a subject on which the mind required a very considerable amount of education.

9. There is not a line in the chapter leading us to believe that any were present except the deputies from Antioch, along with the apostles, elders, and brethren of Jerusalem. That others may have been present is not impossible; but it is not mentioned in the narrative, cannot be proved, and therefore nothing is to be built upon it. To say that it was a representative body, in the literal sense, is to view the transaction from the standpoint of later times.

10. The meeting was not harmonious; there was "much questioning" (ver. 7)—a fact which shows that in the first instance at least inspiration did not interpose to settle the matter authoritatively.

11. Peter, as was proper from his age, his intimacy with the Lord, and the part he had taken in regard to the baptism of Cornelius, gave the right tone to the deliberations, by reminding them that already God had virtually settled the matter by pouring out the Holy Spirit on the first Gentile converts, and had thus levelled all distinctions between Jewish and Gentile believers (vers. 7–11).

12. The multitude next gave ear to Barnabas and Paul rehearsing the wonders which God by them had wrought among the Gentiles. This at least showed the great numbers who would be affected by the decision now to be pronounced (ver. 12).

13. James next pointed out that the sentiments expressed by Peter were in accordance with the Scriptures (vers. 13–21). Amos predicts that God "will build again the tabernacle of David," and set up its ruins, that "the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called." James further declared it as his judgment, that except in the four points which he specifies, the Gentile Christians should be entirely free from the yoke of the law of Moses. Both apostles speak in terms suitable to what is known of them otherwise; Peter boldly gives his voice in favour of freedom; James agrees with him in the main, but prudently suggests that some exceptions ought to be made.

14. After hearing what the various speakers had to say, the apostles and elders arrived at a unanimous decision (ver. 22).

15. The "brethren," that is, the ordinary members of the Church at Jerusalem, as distinguished from the apostles and elders, were present at the deliberations, listened to the discussion, and concurred in the finding (vers. 7, 12, 22).

16. The "elders" present could not possibly have come from any Churches outside Judæa, because in the decree the false teachers are described as "certain which went out *from us*" (ver. 24), and we know that they "came down from Judæa" (ver. 1); there is no hint that they represented any one, for the "multitude" was present, and needed no representative; they sat there in virtue of the fact that elders are appointed to rule in the Church of God (1 Tim. v. 17).

17. It was the apostles and elders who constituted the tribunal of jurisdiction. To them only was the question referred from Antioch (ver. 2); it was the apostles and elders who met to consider the matter (ver. 6); and it was by them that the decrees were ordained (xvi. 4).

18. The decision of the tribunal was embodied in a letter, written in the names of the apostles and elder brethren, and concurred in by the whole Church (vers. 22, 23).

19. The letter embodying the decree was carried down to Antioch by special deputies, chosen by the Synod out of their own number, who should explain it to the Church there, and exhort the members to obedience (vers. 22, 30).

20. The substance of the decision was, that Gentile Christians are exempt from the civil and ceremonial law of Moses in every respect, except in regard to four matters from which they were rigidly to abstain (vers. 24–29). This decree is to the present hour the charter of Gentile freedom. When told by sceptics that we are bound by the Bible to pay tithes, to execute the idolater and blasphemer, to put the Sabbath-breaker and the witch to death, our answer is, that the apostolic decree sets us entirely free from these and all other peculiarities of the old Jewish economy. They are not named among the exceptions, and therefore are of no binding force upon Gentile believers.

21. Examined a little more particularly, their decree

releases the Gentile Christians from the yoke of bondage to the Mosaic law; contains a special injunction—that "ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication" (ver. 29); condemns the false teachers, who "have troubled you with words, subverting your souls" (ver. 24); and denies that they had given them authority for their doctrine or action—"to whom we gave no commandment."

22. This synodical decree was delivered not only to the Church at Antioch, but also to the Churches of Syria and Cilicia (Acts xvi. 4).

23. Great joy and spiritual prosperity resulted from the submission of the Churches to the decrees of the Synod (vers. 31, 32, and xvi. 5).

From these facts embodied in the narrative we infer that the design of the apostles was not merely to set aside the burdensome peculiarities of the Jewish legislation and ritual, but to furnish to all time a general pattern of the manner in which ecclesiastical business is to be transacted.

It is not uncommon to account for the facts asserted in the chapter by the allegation, that there were two questions before the assembly at Jerusalem—a question of doctrine for the apostles to answer, and a question of fact to be answered by the Church and its rulers. But there is nothing referred from Antioch but the question of doctrine; it was the question of doctrine that the apostles and elders met to consider, and on that question the elders, with the concurrence of the whole Church, pronounced no less than the apostles. That there was any question of fact is only a dubious inference from the words in the decree,—"to whom we gave no commandment," —a word which seems the incidental mention of a fact rather than an answer to a question deliberately asked. Besides, had the allegation any real foundation, there would have been no necessity for a united meeting; they would have met separately, the apostles confining themselves to the question of doctrine, and the elders, along with the Church, to the fact that they, without inspiration, were competent to answer. The reference of the doctrinal question only, the incidental manner in which it is mentioned that the false teachers spoke without the authority of the Church from which they went

forth, and the fact that the apostles and elders deliberated, not separately, but together, prove convincingly that there is no good ground for this allegation.

Had the appeal been to inspiration, Paul could have settled the question at Antioch, the apostles would not have met to deliberate, and uninspired elders would not have been admitted to their counsels. Nothing of this kind is ever recorded in case of inspired declarations on any other subject. But those who imagine that on this special occasion the appeal was to inspiration, attach great importance to ver. 28: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things." But this need not refer to more than the fact that the decree was in accordance with the Scriptures as quoted by James, and with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Cornelius and his friends, without regard to their previous non-reception of circumcision. This they understood rightly to mean, that God did not intend to exact from the Gentiles compliance with Jewish rites prior to their reception of the blessings and privileges of Christianity, and that the design of the Holy Spirit to release the Gentiles from the burden of the Jewish law and ritual, was clearly indicated by His providential dealing with them on that occasion. Any Synod or other ecclesiastical body which examines questions in the light of the inspired writings, and decides in harmony with their teaching, and with the manifest leadings of Divine Providence, is justified in saying: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." The appeal was not to inspiration; and yet inspiration was present, and, through the apostles, guided the meeting to a right and sound decision in the matter. The decrees, as approved by the apostles, and recorded in Scripture, convey the mind of the Holy Ghost. This is what we cannot affirm with certainty of any other Synod that has assembled since.

The question has been often asked, Was this meeting a General Council in the proper sense of the word? If the true model of a General Council is one held under the presidency of emperor or pope, and comprising high ecclesiastics gathered together from all parts of Christendom, this bears small resemblance to a General Council. It had no president,

so far as the narrative lets us know. Pope or emperor was not present either in person or by deputy. It was not composed of clergy chosen to represent the Churches on the occasion, and convened from all parts of the inhabited world. It was not therefore an Œcumenical Council in the ordinary sense. All present, so far as we know, were the apostles of Christ, the deputies from Antioch, the elders of Jerusalem, met together to deliberate in presence of the local Church. That a solitary individual over and above these assembled on the occasion is not in evidence. And yet no Council that ever met was more truly representative of all Christendom and of the religious interests of men. It contained the apostles of Christ, themselves the founders of the Churches. It is the true model for all subsequent Synods. All Synods held afterwards are to be tried by this, the primitive and classical model; the Council of Jerusalem is not to be tested by any mere human standard, such as that set up by the emperors and popes of after ages. The judgment of the apostles and elders carries with it a sanction and weight that we cannot attach to any subsequent Council whatever.

Though the decision of the Council was passed with unanimity, and accepted at Antioch as well as in Syria and Cilicia with joy and approval, it did not end the controversy. Few Synods, fallible or infallible, ever do. The Judaizers at Antioch reappear again. Certain came from James who were of the circumcision, and in deference to them even Peter himself wavered in obedience to the decree, and showed signs of forgetting the old lesson which God had taught him, to call no man common or unclean (Gal. ii. 11–14). The Judaizing Christians raised the question again in the Churches of Galatia, and the Epistle written to those Churches by Paul is throughout a polemic in reply to their errors. The Gentile Christians took full advantage of the decree in their favour; but in places where the Jewish element did not dominate, and Jewish sensitiveness could not take offence, they put a lax interpretation on its restrictions, and did not regard them as obligatory on every occasion. The subsequent teaching of Paul interprets, if it does not relax, the injunction of the decree in regard to "meat offered to idols," and shows that to eat or not to eat such meat is a matter of indifference, if by

so doing offence is not given to the conscience of brethren. The substance of the doctrine which on this subject he lays down in 1 Cor. viii. is, "Meat will not commend us to God; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse; nor, if we eat, are we the better. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to the weak." This certainly produces the impression that at least one of the restrictions enjoined in the decree was adopted to avoid hurting Jewish sentiment, rather than because there was anything intrinsically wrong in eating meat offered to an idol. That other exceptions to the general principle of the decree, and indeed the decree itself, did not in after times receive from the Churches all the deference to which they were entitled, is only to say that they were treated in much the same way as many other precepts of the word of God. But that does not weaken the force of the facts and examples set before us in the 15th and 16th chapters of Acts.

No matter how many different questions may be raised upon this well-known chapter of the divine word, no ingenuity can sweep away these decisive facts:—

1. That a doctrinal controversy, causing much dissension, arose among the teachers in the Church at Antioch.

2. That when this dispute could not be settled in the Church where it arose, it was referred to a tribunal outside the Church of Antioch—the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.

3. That no sound reason can be given why inspired men allowed uninspired elders to join in their deliberations, except it was to show that, when the apostles were dead, it was with the elders, that is, the bishops or pastors of the Churches, that the power of settling and regulating such matters as affect the welfare of the Church should remain.

4. That an external tribunal of Church rulers publicly deliberated in Jerusalem upon a question affecting, in the first instance, the Church of Antioch, but many other Churches of Christ as well, and pronounced a decision upon the subject.

5. That the decision received the concurrence of the whole Church in whose presence the deliberations were conducted, and that the decision was embodied in written decrees.

6. That other Churches rendered implicit obedience to these

decrees, and that the result was to give joy, and strength, and spiritual prosperity to these Churches.

Upon these facts we found this general principle, namely, *that a Synod or assembly of regularly appointed rulers, external to the local Church, and consisting, when apostles are not to be obtained, of elders, that is, pastors or congregational bishops, is entitled to meet, deliberate, and decide on what concerns the good and peace of the Churches under their care; and that to the decisions of this tribunal, in so far as they are consistent with the word of God, Christians, so soon as they understand them, are bound to render prompt and willing obedience.*

This is the principle of *synodical jurisdiction;* that is, that all Church members, whether teachers or taught, had in the apostolic age the right of carrying matters of difference to an assembly of Church rulers outside the local Church, and that this assembly had the right to deliberate upon and finally to decide the matter. Upon this whole matter we remark,—

1. Individual Churches have much power. They and their rulers may deal with any subject which concerns themselves alone, and does not touch the common faith, nor affects their relationship to other Churches. Had Antioch succeeded in calming the dissension which arose in its borders, the case would not have gone to Jerusalem.

2. The main thing to be noticed is that in the apostolic age, when a difference arose which could not be settled in the local Church, there was provided a tribunal of ecclesiastical rulers to which disputes could be referred.

3. Disputes between individual Christians are not to be carried farther than the local Church (Matt. xviii. 18); but matters of wider sweep affecting the general interest may be referred to the external body of Church rulers, usually designated a Synod.

4. Now that the apostles no longer live on earth, the Synod is to consist of that class of ecclesiastical rulers with whom the apostles when alive deposited the power of government, and whom they associated with themselves in pronouncing their public decisions; but the elders, in absence of the apostles, are, so far as it is practicable, to be guided in their deliberations by the apostles' words.

5. Elders, it is manifest, sustain a double relation to their

own Church, and then to other Churches, which, for purposes of government and mutual help, are associated with their own.

6. Such appeal usually secures more impartial consideration; for in a Synod whose members usually live at a distance from the scene of difference, and are drawn from a wider area, local prepossessions and impressions are not so likely to bias the judgment.

7. With the mere association of congregations, the principle spoken of in the preceding chapter, each would be a separate unattached society, united only by ties of sympathy; but the synodical principle supplies a bond of union, by which all local Churches that associate are bound together and subjected to a common jurisdiction.

8. Bound together by synodical ties, the aggregate of local Churches rises at once to the position of a strong and influential body, much more than if every local Church stood apart from every other.

9. Power lodged in human hands is at all times more or less liable to abuse; but it is not so liable to be turned to evil purposes when it is left in the hands of the best men, chosen by the many, as when concentrated in the hands of an individual rendered in some degree absolute by the absence of a superior or a colleague, and who is left free to carry out his arbitrary will without any constitutional restraint. No Synod is infallible, and many Synods have erred; but upon the whole, religious freedom is safer in the hands of a Synod than in those of a prelate or a pope. The very freedom with which its members discuss matters and take leave to differ from each other, furnishes in itself a protection against arbitrary and tyrannical action.

10. A Synod, being only a body of ecclesiastical rulers bound to be governed in its objects and proceedings by the word of God, has no right to assume civil authority, or to call in the secular authorities to enforce its decisions by civil penalties.

11. The fact that the last inspired men named in history, called uninspired men into counsel with themselves in arranging the affairs and settling the faith of the Churches, shows that outside the Scriptures, in which the Holy Spirit speaks

and the words of the apostles are contained, there is no permanent infallible guide set up among Christians.

12. Synodical government is no doubt open to the objection, that ambition, jealousy, and other evil passions find room to play in Synods, and that by mere force of natural ability a few unscrupulous men may succeed in establishing an ascendency which good men may be powerless to overcome, and which may in its results cast a moral blight upon the Churches. That is quite true; any principle, divine or human, may be perverted by bad men to bad purposes. Our business at present, however, is not to go on the hopeless errand of finding principles always perfectly administered, for that is what cannot be found, but to ascertain from the New Testament what principles God has sanctioned for the government of the Christian Church.

CHAPTER XII.—THE KINGDOM AND CHURCH.

TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE.

Prophetic Announcements.

In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.—Dan. ii. 44.

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.—Dan. vii. 13, 14.

The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.—Dan. vii. 18.

The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.—Dan. vii. 27.

The Kingdom in Germ.

The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, There! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you.—Luke xvii. 21.

The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.—Rom. xiv. 17.

Receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well pleasing to God.—Heb. xii. 28.

The Kingdom in Manifestation.

In those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness

of Judæa, saying, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. —Matt. iii. 1, 2.

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.—Matt. v. 19.

Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist; yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force.—Matt. xi. 11, 12.

Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.—Matt. xiii. 11.

The kingdom is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat.—Matt. xiii. 24.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field.—Matt. xiii. 31.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened.—Matt. xiii. 33.

The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire.—Matt. xiii. 41.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field.—Matt. xiii. 44.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls, and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.—Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind; which, when it was filled, they drew up on the beach: and they sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they cast away.—Matt. xiii. 47, 48.

I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.—Matt. xvi. 18, 19.

The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.—Matt. xxi. 43.

When ye see these things coming to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh.—Luke xxi. 31.

The Kingdom in Consummation.

Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.—MATT. v. 20.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.—MATT. vii. 21.

Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth.—MATT. viii. 11.

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.—MATT. xiii. 43.

Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.—MATT. xviii. 3.

Verily I say unto you, It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.—MATT. xix. 23.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.—MATT. xxv. 34.

It is good for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell.—MARK ix. 47.

There shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves cast forth without.—LUKE xiii. 28.

Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.—JOHN iii. 3.

They which practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.—GAL. v. 21.

The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto His heavenly kingdom.—2 TIM. iv. 18.

Thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—2 PET. i. 11.

General References to the Kingdom.

The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, which would make a reckoning with his servants.—MATT. xviii. 23.

The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, which made a marriage feast for his son.—MATT. xxii. 2.

He added and spake a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear.—LUKE xix. 11.

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.—JOHN iii. 5.

My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence.—JOHN xviii. 36.

Who delivered us out of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.—COL. i. 13.

That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer.—2 THESS. i. 5.

The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.—REV. xi. 15.

Then cometh the end, when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power: for He must reign till He hath put all His enemies under His feet.—1 COR. xv. 24, 25.

The Church or Aggregate of Saints.

The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity. . . . Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.—MATT. xiii. 41, 42.

The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous.—MATT. xiii. 49.

I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.—MATT. xvi. 18.

They that were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.—MATT. xxv. 10.

Jesus came to them, and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.—MATT. xxviii. 18.

So the church throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified.—ACTS ix. 31, xx. 28.

All these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally as he will.—1 COR. xii. 11.

God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles.—1 COR. xii. 28.

I persecuted the church of God.—1 COR. xv. 9.

He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.—EPH. i. 22, 23.

Ye are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner-stone.—EPH. ii. 20.

To the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God.—Eph. iii. 10.

Unto Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations.—Eph. iii. 21.

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.—Eph. iv. 4–6.

Unto the building up of the body of Christ.—Eph. iv. 12.

May grow up in all things into Him, which is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of every part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.—Eph. iv. 16.

Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself up for it; that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that He might present the church to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.—Eph. v. 25–27.

That thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.—1 Tim. iii. 15.

Unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem . . . to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven.—Heb. xii. 23.

Unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood.—1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.

I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.—Rev. xxi. 2.

DISCUSSION OF THE EVIDENCE.

Does any doubt exist in the mind of any intelligent person who has examined these passages, that the aggregate of all Christian congregations—that is, all who in the world profess the true religion—constitute along with their children what is called the Universal or Catholic Church? This body may be viewed in a twofold aspect, either as consisting of all who profess to belong to Christ, or of all who are Christ's in reality. In one aspect it is called for sake of distinction the Church

visible, because the profession of Christianity, which marks its members out from the world and binds them all together, is itself a visible thing; in another aspect it is called the Church *invisible*, because the bond of faith and of love, which binds them all to Christ and to each other, cannot be seen by mortal eye. The visible and the invisible do not constitute two separate Churches; they constitute one Church, the invisible dwelling within the visible, as the soul dwells in the body; and forms along with it the one living personality. These epithets, "invisible," "visible," "catholic," are not met with in Scripture; but the ideas and distinctions which they express are found in Scripture, and are sufficiently noted by these well understood words.

THE CHURCH VISIBLE.

The aggregate of all professing Christians is sometimes called the Church or congregation of the people of God, not that they have ever met or can meet in one assembly; but they can be viewed as one vast collective body, separated by well-defined marks from the non-Christian community among which they live. Still more frequently they are set forth in Scripture as the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven. The aggregate body receives this name because it is composed of subjects whose king or ruler—the Lord Jesus—is in heaven; and, although its present location is on earth, it professes to be governed by principles and to act in obedience to laws derived from heaven.

This kingdom is specially assigned to the Lord Jesus as Mediator between God and man (1 Cor. xv. 24, 25), and is to be carefully distinguished from that universal dominion over all creatures (Acts x. 36), known as the kingdom of providence, which belongs to Him as the eternal Son of God.[1]

The kingdom is in the Scriptures set before us in three conditions: in its germ, in its development, in its consummation. The kingdom in germ is in the new heart which God gives to the believer; in its development, it is the Church visible set up in the world; in its consummation it is in heaven—"the general assembly and Church of the first-born."

[1] *Aaron's Rod*, Book II. 5.

The first of these is the inner, the second is the outer, and the third is the upper kingdom. Still, it is the one kingdom, only in different stages of development.

The expressions "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God," may have a slightly different shade of meaning; but practically they are synonymous, and each of them is used repeatedly in the second and third applications now named. But it is in the second of these applications, as referring to the Christian community on earth, that the "kingdom of heaven" comes up for discussion in questions relating to Church government.

That which in a peculiar sense is the kingdom of Christ was announced in prophecy (Dan. ii. 44), introduced by the ministry of the Lord (Matt. iv. 17), established in the world by the preaching of the apostles (Acts xx. 25), and is entirely different in its nature from political and secular kingdoms (John xviii. 36). It is the Christian Church as set up among men.

The keys of the kingdom, that is, the power of admitting to its membership or excluding from it, were, in the first instance, given to Peter (Matt. xvi. 19); and this power he used when he opened the door, first to the Jews (Acts ii.), and then to the Gentiles (Acts x.), by the preaching of the word. They who enter the Church must be born of water and of the Spirit (John iii. 5); by baptism, or the birth of water, they enter the Church visible; by conversion, or the birth of the Spirit, they enter the Church invisible. In accordance with this law, converts from Judaism and paganism were always baptized, and sometimes endowed with the supernatural gifts of the Holy Ghost at their entrance into the kingdom (Acts ii. 38, x. 44–48, xix. 6).

This kingdom contains something that is very precious, namely, Christ and His salvation. This is figuratively described as "the pearl of great price"—the "treasure hidden in the field" (Matt. xiii. 44, 46). The wisdom of seeking for it is clear; the advantage of possessing it is well worth purchasing, and even suffering in order to obtain it (Matt. vi. 33; Mark ix. 47; 2 Thess. i. 5).

The kingdom in its membership consists of two classes, the good and the evil, both professing subjection to the King.

The good are His loyal and obedient subjects; they are the saints of the Most High, who are in reality what they profess to be; they are the true children of the kingdom, who have been delivered from the powers of darkness, although, while occupying for a little the field of this world, they daily come in contact with the wicked (Matt. xiii. 37–43, 47, xxv. 1; Col. i. 13). That evil men to a certain extent mingle with the righteous in the membership of the Church in this world appears from the representations given of it in the Gospels. The kingdom contains the servant who did not improve his talent (Luke xix. 11–27); the man who came to the marriage without a wedding garment (Matt. xxii. 2–14); the man who showed no mercy to his brethren, and who was taken and handed over to the tormentors (Matt. xviii. 23–35). It contains some who break the commandments of God, and teach others to do the same (Matt. v. 19); and it contains the foolish virgins as well as the wise (Matt. xxv. 1). Things that offend must have been in it, else they could not be gathered out of it; and there are some persons, to all outward appearance children of the kingdom, who at a future day shall be cast into the outer darkness (Matt. xiii. 40–43, viii. 12, 13).

Let us note also the progress of the kingdom. It has a small beginning, like the mustard seed, but it grows in dimensions until it becomes a tree, and the fowls of heaven come and lodge in its branches (Matt. xiii. 31, 32). It pervades the world with its influence, as the leaven silently leavens the meal (Matt. xiii. 33). The stone which smote the image in the king's dream, grew into a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This the prophet interprets to mean that the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, but which shall break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms, and shall itself stand for ever (Dan. ii. 35, 44). The kingdoms of this world merge at last in the one great universal kingdom of Christ, and the saints possess it in the end (Dan. vii. 18, 27; Rev. xi. 15).

From a comparison of the prophetic intimations regarding the kingdom, and the descriptions given of it in the Gospels, with the realization presented in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles of the New Testament, we conclude that the

kingdom of heaven, as set forth in the Scriptures, is a visible and spiritual society, existing in the world, raised up by God, organized by the apostles, receiving members into its fellowship by baptism, governed by principles and precepts of heavenly origin, containing saints and sinners bound together by the common profession of faith in Christ, gradually extending its influence among men, and going on to the conquest of the world. Let us look where we may, we cannot find on earth any society except the Church visible—that is, the aggregate body of those who, with their families, profess to believe in Christ — in which all these characteristics meet.

On these facts we build this conclusion—*That the congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the whole world is the Church visible and catholic, that is, the kingdom of Christ on earth.*

Let it be observed,—

1. That the Founder of the Church, as it is set up in the world, is Christ ; that its principles and rules of government are contained in the Scriptures ; and that the design and aims of the society are spiritual.

2. That this society stands in outward relationship to Christ, conferring on its members certain privileges and ordinances, and designed to advance the divine glory in the present good and future salvation of men.

3. It is composed of many local and separate congregations and persons, all professing faith in Christ ; it is quite distinct in its origin, nature, and object from any mere earthly kingdom or association, and it is furnished with officers of its own to carry on its separate government and administration.

4. This kingdom is catholic or universal in regard to place ; that is, it is not, like the Jewish Church, limited to one country, or race, or language, but is intended for every nation and kindred and tongue and people.

5. It is indestructible by all the power of Satan or of wicked men. The good and bad are to live together, as the tares and the wheat grow together on the field of the world until the harvest day. The kingdom is to live till the end ; the dominion of Christ is from generation to generation.

THE CHURCH INVISIBLE.

Let us now regard the subject in a still higher point of view. Let us consider the Church, apart altogether from those who belong to it only in name, as consisting only of saved souls. In this aspect it is the *congregatio sanctorum*—the aggregate of all saints. Never since the beginning of time have all the saints been assembled in the same place, and they never can meet together prior to the second coming of the Lord. The bond that unites every one of them to the Lord is invisible to human eyes, yet they may be regarded apart from those with whom on earth they are associated in outward organization, and as constituting the one aggregate body.

The scriptural application of the word *ecclesia*, whose literal meaning is *a congregation*, to the collective company of the saints of every age and of every clime, conveys to the mind a deep impression of the essential unity of the people of God. True saints, however wide apart in time, place, rank, opinions, or other circumstances, are all one in Christ Jesus; they constitute in their aggregate character the one great congregation, the "one family of God," the "household of faith," the "new Jerusalem," the "general assembly and Church of the first-born," the "city of the living God." Though the individuals be countless as the sand on the shore, a multitude that no man can number, yet the Scriptures speak of all as constituting one body, in virtue of their relationship to Jesus. All united to Christ by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost constitute the one body, and of this body every saint is a member.

This is the true unity. It does not arise from any external organization, or uniformity in outward rites and forms of worship. It is entirely independent of any such bonds. The true unity is that of the Spirit. It is a unity produced by the Holy Ghost, who works in them the faith which unites them all to Christ, and the love which binds them to each other (Eph. iv. 4–6). However divided by space and time, all are wedded to Christ, as the bride is to her husband; all are members of the one body, all are branches of the one vine, all are stones of the one living temple. They are all one in

this respect, that the Holy Ghost pervades them all with the same spiritual life, dividing to each of them gifts and graces according to His will.

The profession of a common faith is the lax and flexible bond which binds into one Christian community the members of the Church visible. But true faith in Jesus is the indestructible bond which binds into one the aggregate of the saints. Although this bond, unseen to the human eye, gives occasion to call them in theological language the Church *invisible,* the fact is that living saints, who by this unseen bond are united to the Lord Jesus, are in other respects as visible as their neighbours. It is not merely to misrepresent, it is to burlesque our principles, to say that we believe in two Churches, one of which can be seen and the other cannot be seen. What we do say is that there is one Church of Christ, but that this may be regarded in two aspects ; that the saints of God reside for the most part within the visible Christian community as the kernel inside the shell, or as the soul in the body. Yet this one Church, as it appears to the eye of sense in this world of sin, is never anything even at the best but a poor, deformed, unshapely, and inadequate representation of the body of Christ.

The congregation of all saints is the one Church of the living God in the highest and truest sense. To it and to it alone belong all the notes or marks which some claim for this or the other section of the Church visible. We can say in respect of it what cannot be said for any portion of the Church visible, however pure or however venerable it may happen to be. Not only is it *one* for reasons already stated, but it is *holy ;* for every member of it, saved from sin in its guilt and power, is either perfect already, or is progressing in love and holiness towards perfection (Eph. iv. 16). It is *catholic,* or universal ; that is, it comprises the saints of every country and of all time, not omitting one whom Christ has redeemed (Eph. v. 25–27). It is *apostolic ;* for it is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone (Matt. xvi. 18 ; Eph. ii. 20 ; 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5). This Church is the pillar and the ground, that is, the proclaimer and supporter, of the truth (1 Tim. iii. 15). In a peculiar manner, it is the subject of

the love of Christ, and to the angels, throughout the ages, it furnishes a constant illustration of the wisdom and glory of God (Eph. v. 29 and iii. 10, 21). To this Church Christ has promised His presence and His Spirit, but not to any section of the visible Church any further than it includes His saints. The characteristics of the whole body are found in some degree in every individual of the children of God.

Saints in this world dwell among sinners, and associate with them in everyday life, and even in the membership of the Church; the separation between them will be complete and final only at the end of the world (Matt. xiii. 39-43, 47–49, xxv. 1–10).

Upon these facts we rest this great truth—*That the congregation of all saved souls is in the highest and truest sense the Church of Christ, one, holy, catholic and apostolic—the collective company of those whom He loved, and for whom He gave Himself, and whom He will present spotless and perfect to the Father at the last day.*

We infer from the facts and principles now stated—

1. That the Church in germ begins with the first sinner, saved from sin by the grace of God. The outward organization, with its officers, forms of worship, and ritual, dates from the wilderness; but in its enlarged and reconstructed form, with new doctrines and ordinances and a more spiritual worship, it dates from the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection.

2. The Church, or congregation of all God's saints, cannot be limited to any external organization whatever. In any association where a true Christian is found, there at least is one member of the Church of Christ; but no section of the outward visible Church includes all living saints. Every human being who stands in the spiritual relationship of union with the living Christ, no matter in what ecclesiastical connection he is found, is in reality a member of the one true Church. He is one of the aggregate of God's saints

3. No local Church, or association of local Churches, however numerous, widely extended, or influential, which leaves any Churches outside itself, is entitled to assume the name of the Church of Christ, if by so doing it means it to be understood that there are no true saints in any other ecclesiastical

body. Such an aggregate is only a part, and a very small part, of the whole.

4. That the aggregate of all saints—the Church invisible—is infallible, may possibly be true; but, so far as we are concerned, it is a question of no practical importance, because that Church has never met, and cannot meet under present circumstances. Consequently it has no voice; no individual member has any authority to speak its mind. None is entitled to speak in its name except its living Head; and as the heavens have received Him "until the times of restoration of all things," the mind of the Church can only be known through the Holy Scriptures, in which the Head of the Church addresses Himself to men.

5. Of no other Church except of the aggregate of God's saints—the *congregatio sanctorum*, can it be affirmed with all the fulness of truth, that it is one, holy, catholic and apostolic; this is not true of the Church visible, nor of any section of the Church visible, except in a very limited and imperfect degree.

6. To the congregation of God's saints, not to any outward organization of Churches, belong the glorious visions of the prophets and the promises of the gospel (Ps. lxxii. 5; Dan. ii. 44; Matt. xvi. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26; and Luke i. 33).

CHAPTER XIII.—THE KING AND HEAD OF THE CHURCH.

TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE.

Kingship.

I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.—Ps. ii. 6.

Ask of me, and I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.—Ps. ii. 8.

He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.—Ps. lxxii. 8.

All kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him.—Ps. lxxii. 11.

The Lord saith unto my Lord, Sit Thou at my right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.—Ps. cx. 1.

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon His kingdom to establish it, and to uphold it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever.—Isa. ix. 6, 7.

The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; He will save us.—Isa. xxxiii. 22.

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and He came even to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him; and there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.—Dan. vii. 13, 14.

Thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall One come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.—Micah v. 2.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jeru-

salem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt, the foal of an ass.—Zech. ix. 9.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever: and of His kingdom there shall be no end.—Luke i. 32, 33.

Nathanael answered Him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art King of Israel.—John i. 49.

The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand.—John iii. 35.

He hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.—John v. 23.

My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight.—John xviii. 36.

Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.—Matt. xxviii. 18–20.

And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.—Mark xvi. 15.

One Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him.—1 Cor. viii. 6.

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.—Gal. vi. 2.

Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and He put all things in subjection under His feet.—Eph. i. 20–22.

Unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.—Eph. iv. 7.

I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.—Rev. i. 18.

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks are seven churches.—Rev. i. 20.

Headship.

He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.—Eph. i. 22, 23.

Grow up in all things unto Him, which is the Head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of every part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.—Eph. iv. 16.

The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the Head of the church, being Himself the Saviour of the body; but as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything.—Eph. v. 23, 24.

No man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the church; because we are members of His body.—Eph. v. 29, 30.

He is the Head of the body, the church.—Col. i. 18.

In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and in Him ye are made full, who is the Head of all principality and power. —Col. ii. 10.

Holding fast the Head, from whom all the body being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God.—Col. ii. 19.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE.

Perhaps we may be better able to see the force of the argument for the sovereignty of Christ in His own kingdom, if we consider that throughout the whole apostolic age there was no competing claim.

The civil powers of the time, as represented by Cæsar and his subordinates, were not the friends, but the enemies and persecutors of the faith. Herod the Great at a very early period sought the young child's life. Herod Antipas beheaded John the Baptist. He joined in with Pontius Pilate and the Jewish authorities in crucifying Jesus. At a later period Herod Agrippa slew James and imprisoned Peter; while the Roman procurator of the time sent Paul a prisoner to Rome. The civil magistrate, as represented by these dignities, was not friendly to Christianity.

Jesus and the apostles always inculcated respect and obedience to the civil power acting in its own province. He Himself paid tribute, and refused to permit His followers to make Him a king. When charged with treason before Pilate, He explained that His kingdom was in no sense a worldly kingdom, and that therefore His authority need not run counter to Cæsar's. His apostles inculcated on all Christians subjection to the higher powers, the payment of tribute, the duty of honour and obedience, as well as of offering prayer "for kings and all that are in high place;" and taught in the clearest terms that civil government is itself the ordinance of God intended for the benefit of man (Rom. xiii. 1–7; 1 Tim. ii. 1–3; Tit. iii. 1, 2; 1 Pet. ii. 13–17).

The apostles and early Christians suffered much at the hands of the civil rulers; but it was always for their faith, never for crime, nor for disobedience to the authorities acting strictly in their own sphere. Herod put Peter in prison because he saw "it pleased the Jews;" Paul was put in the stocks at Philippi ostensibly on the charge that he and Silas "troubled the city and set forth customs" which it was not lawful for Romans to receive, but in reality for casting a spirit of divination out of a woman; and the same apostle was sent prisoner to Rome for no reason, except that the Jews raised a tumult and accused him falsely of defiling their temple. To all this treatment, and to much more, the apostles submitted patiently, because, however erroneous the judgment of the civil rulers, they were acting within their own sphere. It was only when they travelled outside the secular, and trespassed on the domain of the spiritual, by commanding not to teach or speak in the name of Jesus, that Peter disobeyed them to their face, and justified his action in the noble words: WE MUST OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN. In the sphere of the secular, the supreme civil power knows no superior except God and the law which he administers; but in the sphere of the spiritual, there is a domain into which neither the civil magistrate nor that civil law which he administers has a right to enter. In all cases where in spiritual things the human authority wilfully countermands the divine, there is only one true attitude for the Church and the Christian—to obey God rather than man (Acts v.; Dan. vi. 5–10).

Nor is there any trace in the New Testament of any minister or Church member assuming supremacy in spiritual matters over the whole Church of Christ. The apostles were not only inspired, but commissioned to lay down the divine law, and to set up the Christian Church in the world. They did, before they were baptized with the Holy Spirit, contend with one another as to who should be greatest; but they were informed by the Master, that lordship such as was wielded by the kings of the Gentiles was not to exist among them, and that the greater among them was to be the servant of all (Luke xxii. 25, 26). Jerusalem was indeed the "Mother Church" of Christendom, but she set up no claim to be the "mistress" of all Churches. There is by divine authority no visible spiritual supremacy set up over the Churches of Christ. Peter counts it as his honour to be a co-presbyter [ὁ συνπρεσβύτερος], "a fellow-elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ;" and does not arrogate to himself any superiority over Paul, or any supremacy over the other apostles. So far as the New Testament shows, there was no person, inside or outside the college of apostles, upon whom the Master conferred spiritual supremacy over His kingdom and Church.

This prepares the way for our estimating aright the evidence already submitted, to show that the Lord Jesus Christ alone is Head of the Church. This phrase is a figurative expression founded on the relation which the head bears to the human body, and is intended to convey generally an idea of the intimate and essential connection between Christ and His saints. When analysed, the particular facts expressed by the term are the following:—

1. *Union.*—As the human head and the members of the body unite to form the one living personality, so Christ and His people are one. In consequence of this, the spiritual influence descends from the head, lubricates the joints, pervades the body and every member of the body, and communicates to the whole system the same blessed life (Eph. v. 30).

2. *Supremacy.*—As the head controls and governs the body and the remotest member of it, so Christ is supreme over the whole congregation of His saints (Eph. v. 23, 24).

3. *Growth.*—This connection between Christ and His saints is essential to their increase of grace and to their fruitfulness

in good works; if that connection was interrupted, their growth and fruitfulness would be at an end. The branch cannot bring forth fruit except it abide in the vine (John xv. 4, 5; Eph. iv. 16).

4. *Completeness.*—As a body without the head is imperfect, so is the Church without Christ. No Christ, no living Church (Col. ii. 10, 19).

The term headship is thus expressive of Christ's close and most intimate union with His saints. As none but real saints are members of the body of Christ, it is only to the Church in its highest sense that He stands in this intimate and peculiar relationship.

But the term fails to express that relationship of supreme authority and power in which Christ stands to the Church visible. The passages of Scripture which we group together under the head of kingship, bring out the idea of His supremacy over His own kingdom in a still more striking form.

Without dwelling on the prophetic intimations of Himself and His kingdom given by the prophets of the Old Testament, which are very precise and emphatic, we may call attention to the announcement of the angel before His birth, that "the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end;" that He has "put all things in subjection under His feet;" and that His "kingdom is not of this world." We have it thus directly stated that He is a King sitting upon a throne, that His kingdom is spiritual in its nature and objects, and that His dominion is universal. Titles of dignity and honour, such as are given to supreme rulers, are given to Him. He is "Lord and Christ;" a "King on His holy hill of Zion;" a "Governor, which shall be shepherd of my people Israel;" "King of kings and Lord of lords." Acts of sovereign power are recorded of Him in the Scriptures; He commissions the apostles, and lays down laws for the Church. He institutes ordinances: the preaching of the gospel, the rite of baptism, the Lord's Supper, the Lord's day, and the Church meeting. He institutes offices in the Church, and assigns to each office its duties. Everything done in the Church is done in His name and by His authority; the

apostles spoke, and taught, and baptized "in His name;" men prayed "in His name;" the Church meets "in His name;" and discipline is administered "in His name."

Upon these facts we rest the great principle of *the supremacy and kingly authority of Christ.* He is at once the King and Head of the Church, visible and invisible. Over all principalities and powers Christ is supreme. In His own kingdom He alone is King; and in His Church, the congregation of the saints, He is Head in the scriptural sense already explained. When we speak of the headship and authority of Christ as regards the Church visible, we simply mean that everything ought to be done in the Church according to His mind and will; and that in our circumstances His mind and will can only be learned from the written word. To us the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, justly and truly interpreted, are the mind of Christ.

To sum up what we have to say on this subject. The *headship* of Christ, though a great and blessed truth in itself, does not bring out in adequate expression that relationship of regal supremacy in which the Lord Jesus stands to the Church visible. To the passages which speak of HEADSHIP we need to add those other passages which speak of the KINGDOM and of the KING. Of these we have given only a sample. Numberless are the passages of Scripture which treat of that glorious theme. But we have quoted enough to show that Christ's kingdom on earth is the Church visible. He has set up that kingdom on earth, and granted to the children of men the privilege of being members. As its supreme ruler He has established laws which we as subjects are bound to observe, and appointed officers whom we are to obey. He prescribes duties that we are bound to discharge, He confers privileges which He intends us to improve and enjoy, and He has given to His Church promises in which we are to rejoice. When any other power, from within or from without, interposes between Christ and His people, and insists on having his own will carried out in opposition to the will of Christ as expressed in the Scriptures, he so far interferes with the right of the King to govern His own kingdom. In other words, that power, be it what it may, attempts to set at nought the kingly authority and supremacy of the Lord Jesus, in regard to which

He says Himself, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth."

SUMMARY OF PRINCIPLES.

Thus, by a careful induction of facts, we have ascertained the divine elements in the constitution of that Church, which the apostles of Christ set up in the world in the first century of our era. It only now remains that we sum them all up, and bring them under the eye of the reader at the same time. This will enable any intelligent man to see for himself what amount of truth there is in the popular statement, usually thrown out by well-meaning people who have not studied the subject, and who therefore can afford to be liberal, that no system of Church government is laid down in the New Testament. Were that statement true, then all systems would stand on the same low human level, and it would be a mere matter of expediency or convenience which we adopt, or whether we adopt any in particular. Some, there can be no doubt, would wish to have it so believed. But such a statement, founded on no reasonable ground whatever, will not have much weight with any who calmly consider the scriptural evidence which we have now submitted to the contrary, and who have found, as we have done, the following facts and principles set out clearly in the word of God:—

1. *The Church.*—That all who believe the gospel and reside within convenient distance of each other should enrol themselves in a religious society under the authority of Christ, and should meet statedly in one place for the worship of God, for the observance of Christian ordinances, and for mutual edification.

2. *The Ministry.*—That in each Church there existed a class of men who had functions to discharge different from those of ordinary Church members, and that the existence of these officials in each Church is a divine and permanent institution.

3. *The Deacon.*—That in the local Church there was set up, under the direction of the apostles, a distinct class of

officers, whose business was to minister to the wants of the poor, and who are known by the name deacons.

4. *The Elder.*—The duties of ruling and instructing the local Churches were committed to an order of officers all of equal official rank, but who in the Scriptures are designated indiscriminately by such names as elders, bishops, pastors, presbyters, ministers, and teachers.

5. *The Presbytery.*—That every local Church was placed by the apostles under the spiritual oversight of a plurality of elders or bishops, who, when associated together for ecclesiastical purposes, constituted the presbytery or eldership.

6. *Popular Election.* — The officers of the Church were chosen by the members of the Church.

7. *Ordination.* — That to the presbytery, that is, to the presbyters or bishops of the Church orderly associated as a body, belongs the right of solemnly setting apart all Church officers with fasting, prayer, and laying on of hands.

8. *Church Rule.*—Every local Church is by divine right vested with a self-governing and self-purifying power, to be exerted in accordance with the law of Christ; and its rulers, acting on its behalf, and with its consent, have divine authority to admit members, to edify and judge brethren, to expel offenders, to restore penitents, and to carry out in accordance with divine directions the general objects for which the Church was founded.

9. *Finance.*—It is the ordinance of God that the members of the Church are, in proportion to their means, to contribute to religious and charitable objects,—to the support of the ministry, the extension of the gospel, and the relief of the poor.

10. *Intercommunion and Association of Churches.* — The Churches of the apostolic age were so united to each other by bonds of faith and love and sympathy, as in reality to constitute one universal Church—the aggregate of believers, the different parts of which were kept asunder only by the conditions attached to human life.

11. *Synodical Jurisdiction.*—That a Synod, or assembly of regularly appointed rulers external to the local Church, and in the absence of apostles, consisting of elders, that is, congregational bishops or pastors, is entitled to meet, deliberate,

and decide on what concerns the good and peace of the Churches under their care: and that to the decisions of this tribunal, in so far as they are consistent with the word of God, Christians, so soon as they understand them, are bound to render prompt and willing obedience.

12. *The Kingdom and Church Universal.*—1. The congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the whole world is the Church visible and catholic, that is, the kingdom of Christ on earth. 2. That the congregation of all saved souls is, in the highest and truest sense, the Church of Christ, one, holy, catholic, and apostolic—the collective company of those whom He loved, and for whom He gave Himself, and whom He will present spotless and perfect to the Father at the last day.

13. *Headship of Christ.*—That Christ alone is King and Head of the Church; that in virtue of the supremacy and kingly authority, everything in the Church must be regulated in accordance with His mind and will so far as known; and every other power from without or within, which designedly sets at nought His authority in His own kingdom, is an usurpation.

It would be hazardous to assert that the above comprise all the Church principles imbedded in the Holy Scriptures. That they are among the most important there can be little doubt. But it is quite possible that circumstances may call into prominence others now lying outside the range of ordinary vision, or that deeper study may lead to new discoveries in this direction. No wise man will ever refuse to examine, or voluntarily shut his eyes to, any new light which may break forth from the Book of God. Meanwhile the principles now set forth appear to us very clear. Subsequent study may perhaps modify them, or even augment their number; but no fair and honest study of the Bible is ever likely to uproot and destroy them. These divine elements are among the First Principles of the Oracles of God. To know them thoroughly, and the scriptural basis on which they rest, is to be furnished with an ever present demonstration of the truth—that "the Lord Jesus, as King and Head of His Church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of Church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate."

BOOK III.

HUMAN ADDITIONS.

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During the fourteen centuries which elapsed between the close of the New Testament canon and the Reformation, the scriptural principles of Church polity were much altered by change of circumstances, and especially by foreign elements imported out of paganism on the one side and Judaism on the other. The general effect was a whole series of ideas which arose, indeed, in the most natural way, but which produced a form of government entirely different from that laid down in the Christian Scriptures. The result was a series of ecclesiastical growths entirely human, opposed to the divine model, corrupting the purity of the Church, obscuring the faith, and so pernicious in themselves, as to justify the great movement known as the Reformation, made to emancipate Christians from their evil and degrading influence. Some of these growths it is the design of this Book to examine, more particularly in regard to their origin, their nature, and effects.

CHAPTER I.—PRIESTHOOD.

THE SACERDOTAL IDEA.

THE central idea of Priesthood is that of a man who, on behalf of other men, stands at an altar and presents to God sacrifice and offerings for sin. Other kindred duties—mediation, intercession, benediction, direction—are usually connected with the office; but these are all subordinate to the main duty of a priest—offering sacrifice to God. The English word priest is said to be a short form of *presbyter;* but whether this is so or not, the two words differ entirely in meaning. Presbyter is the English form of the Greek word πρεσβύτερος, which means an *elder;* whereas *priest* in its literal and usual signification is synonymous with the ἱερεύς of the Greeks and the *sacerdos* of the Latins, and signifies one who offers sacrifice.

From early times we find Abel, Noah, Abraham, Job, and other patriarchs presenting sacrifices to God for themselves and their households. Each acted as his own priest. The animals which they offered on these occasions were clean beasts and birds—the bullock or heifer, the lamb or kid, the turtle-dove or pigeon. On the altar, the animal offered had its blood shed and its life taken away by the priest in solemn religious service rendered to the Almighty. This is the primitive model of priesthood.

During the sojourn of the Israelites in the desert, this ancient mode of worship is divinely modified to suit the necessities of a nation. A common altar is erected at the door of the tabernacle; a common ritual is prescribed; and Aaron and his sons in hereditary succession are appointed to be priests for the whole congregation. The idea of the sacrifice was to make atonement for sin by the death of the victim, and to induce Deity to look with favour on the sinner.

But to an Israelite of an intelligent and spiritual mind, the whole thing was symbolic and typical. He could scarcely imagine that in any other way than in symbol the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin. The death of the victim on the altar was the dim shadow of a great future sacrifice of infinite worth. The typical act taught the worshippers in a rude but impressive form that they were sinners; that for their sin they deserved to die; that in mercy a substitute had been provided; that the substitute would be accepted in their room; and that in virtue of the victim's death the sinner would escape. Sacrifice was no doubt a coarse method of inculcating spiritual lessons; but it was not unsuited to a rude age. The great truths which lie at the basis of the gospel—guilt, mercy, substitution, atonement, justice, penalty, reconciliation, deliverance—are the ideas set forth symbolically in the divine institution of sacrifice: and with these ideas in the worship of God priesthood was associated from the first.

By divine appointment the priest, in his offering to God gifts and sacrifices for sins, ministered first at the tabernacle and afterwards at the temple, down till the time when the Son of God died on the cross, and thus put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; and when the destruction of the second temple, which followed in little more than a generation after, had made the Jewish worship in its ancient form impossible, the type was then exhausted by the actual presence of the antitype.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF JESUS.

The Lord Jesus was not a descendant of Levi and Aaron, and therefore not a priest in accordance with the requirements of the Mosaic law. By human descent He belonged to the tribe of Judah and the royal family of David—a tribe and family from which no priest was ever taken before. Like Melchisedec of old, He was of quite a different order, standing out alone, entirely dissevered from the sons of Aaron; yet, in despite of lineal descent, set forth in Scripture as "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession." In His person, in His substitution, His sacrifice, and mediation, He has realized everything that was set forth symbolically in the ancient types.

The Scripture representations given of the Lord Jesus are such as to create the impression that henceforth every other priest is needless. He took upon Him human nature, that He might be able to die on behalf of men, and gain the victory over our great enemy. "Since, then, the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself, in like manner, partook of the same, that through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. . . . Wherefore it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." Morally without blemish, He was the highest type of humanity, being holy, guileless, undefiled, separate from sinners. He voluntarily took upon Himself our guilt, that is, our obligation to suffer the penalty of sin, in order that we might be set free from that obligation—"Him who knew no sin, He made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." He became our substitute Himself—"He suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God." The wood of the cross was the altar upon which He offered up His own body in sacrifice,—"His own self bare our sins in His body upon the tree." When His sacrifice was offered, He ascended to heaven, and entered into the holiest of all,—He "through His own blood entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption." This great High Priest, who has entered into heaven, never dies any more, and therefore His sacerdotal office never can be vacant; the sons of Aaron "indeed have been made priests many in number, because that by death they are hindered from continuing; but this Man, because He abideth for ever, hath His priesthood unchangeable." A portion of His priestly work He continues to perform on behalf of His people now that He is in heaven—"He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Meanwhile His great sacrifice on earth has accomplished the purpose for which it was intended; for we are told of His mission to the world, that "once at the end of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," and also that

"where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." No further need for offering sacrifice exists, for "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." The work of propitiation being thus completed, the great High Priest repeats His sacrifice no more; He having "offered one sacrifice for sin for ever, sat down on the right hand of the throne of God." So, "having been made perfect, He became, unto all them that obey Him, the Author of eternal salvation."

Thus the types of the Old Testament have found their full realization in the facts of the gospel. Christ the Son of God is our High Priest. His offering His own life for human salvation makes any other sacrifice for sin unnecessary. In the ordinance of the Supper we do not repeat the sacrifice; by a simple rite of divine institution we merely commemorate the great sacrifice offered on Calvary once for all. The perfect sacrifice does not need to be repeated. As the Lord sware to him, Jesus is "a Priest for ever."

THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRISTIANS.

There is a sense in which all Christians are designated in the Scripture *priests;* but it is not the sense in which priesthood is affirmed either of the sons of Aaron or of the Lord Jesus. The prospect of such a dignity is conditionally presented to the Israelites in the word addressed to them at Sinai—"Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me from among all peoples; for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. xix. 6). But the prospect seems to be realized in the case of Christians, of whom, in regard to their relation to their Redeemer, we read the following statements in the New Testament:—

Unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood [εἰς ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον], to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.—1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.

But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood [βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα], a holy nation, a people for God's own possession.—1 Pet. ii. 9.

He made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto His God [ἱερεῖς τῷ Θεῷ] and Father.—Rev. i. 6.

Thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with Thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests [βασιλείαν καὶ ἱερεῖς]; and they reign upon the earth.—Rev. v. 9, 10.

Over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ [ἱερεῖς τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ], and shall reign with Him a thousand years.—Rev. xx. 6.

These are all the passages in the New Testament which appear to affirm the universal priesthood of believers. The passages quoted from the Apocalypse ought, however, to be left out of account, not only because they are taken from the symbolical parts of a very symbolical book, but because they refer not so much to what Christians are, as to what they are hereafter to be. The two verses taken from the same chapter of the First Epistle of Peter bear on our present condition, and show that there is a sense in which believers can be legitimately called priests—a "holy priesthood." What is this sense? it may be asked.

We answer, that they are priests and a priesthood exactly in the sense in which they are kings and a kingdom. They are priests in the figurative sense of the word; that is, there is something in their present position so like that of priesthood, that by the common figure of metaphor they are designated priests. All metaphors are founded on resemblance, real or supposed. If we call a man "a lion," we simply mean that in courage, or bravery, or in some other quality, he is supposed to be like a lion. If in rhetorical language we call any ordinary man "a king," we mean that in dignity, or generosity, or some other noble characteristic, he resembles a king. We designate a rich and liberal merchant as a "merchant *prince*," not that for a moment we regard him as a real prince, but because that in the possession of ample means, and in the generous use that he makes of his means, he is like what in our idea a prince ought to be. The Bible is written in this figurative language, which every one is supposed to understand. In this manner it speaks of Christian people as a holy priesthood. What is the point of resemblance which justifies the metaphor? It is this—A priest, as any man can

learn from the Levitical law, is consecrated to the service of God, and offers sacrifice at an altar. So every true Christian is set apart for God's work, and has a sacrifice to present to God. What is that sacrifice? It is not animal life. It is not bread and wine transubstantiated, or supposed to be so, into flesh and blood. What we offer to God is something spiritual in its nature; it is ourselves, our soul and body, our humble service, our thanksgiving and praise. Poor sacrifices are these to bring; but we have it in command to bring them, and, poor as they are, they are accepted through the merits of Christ. We are to put ourselves, soul and body, as much at the service of the God whom we worship, as is the dumb animal which, in obedience to His will, bleeds upon His altar. Especially if his obedience cost the believer something, the act is a spiritual sacrifice acceptable in the sight of God.

SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES.

The following passages of Scripture show the kind of offerings which the saints are to present, and the presentation of which to God justifies the use of the metaphor that describes them as priests:—

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.—Ps. li. 17.

I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.—Rom. xii. 1.

Ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God, therefore, in your body.—1 Cor. vi. 20.

If I am offered on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.—Phil. ii. 17.

Having received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God. —Phil. iv. 18.

Through Him, then, let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His name. But to do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.—Heb. xiii. 15, 16.

These passages show that the sacrifices which Christians present to God, and on the ground of which alone they have

any claim to be priests, are not sacrifices in the ordinary sense of the term; they are sacrifices only in a figurative sense. Spiritual sacrifices are in the sight of God more valuable than hecatombs of beasts bleeding upon the altar; still they are not sacrifices in the literal sense of the word—they are such things as believers every day in life, and while engaged in their daily occupations, are able to present to God—the penitent heart, the service of the body, doing good, Christian liberality, thanksgiving to God.

Justin Martyr, writing about the middle of the second century, shows how accurately he understood the teaching of the New Testament on this subject:—

"So we, *who through the name of Jesus have believed* as one man in God the Maker of all, have been stripped, through the name of His first-begotten Son, of the filthy garments of our sins; and being vehemently inflamed by the word of His calling, *we are the true high-priestly race* of God, as even God Himself bears witness, saying that in every place among the Gentiles sacrifices are presented to Him, well pleasing and pure. Now God receives sacrifices from no one except through His priests." [1]

Clement of Alexandria, writing early in the third century, shows that he understood the meaning of the apostle, in the following passage, where he describes the character of the true Gnostic, or Christian of the highest type:—

"His whole life is a holy festival. His sacrifices are prayers, and praises, and readings in the Scriptures before meals, and psalms and hymns during meals and before bed, and prayers also again during night. . . . And what? Does he not also know the other kind of sacrifice, which consists in the giving both of doctrines and of money to those who need? Assuredly. But he does not use wordy prayer by his mouth; having learned to ask of the Lord what is requisite. In every place, therefore, but not ostensibly and visibly to the multitude, he will pray." [2]

ALLEGED UNIVERSAL PRIESTHOOD.

It has always been a fruitful source of error in religion, the

[1] *Dialogue with Trypho*, chap. 116. [2] *Stromata*, Bk. vii. chap. 7.

misconception of figurative language. The Great Teacher was fond of using this expressive mode of speech, and His hearers sometimes understood the figurative as if it was intended to be literal. He spoke of a certain temple, which, if destroyed, He should raise again in three days; they understood Him to refer to the material edifice which Herod had spent more than forty years in restoring and adorning: whereas the temple that He meant was His own body. When He told His disciples to beware of "the leaven of Herod," He intended doctrine; but they understood Him to mean bread. When teaching His disciples to commemorate His death by using the symbols of bread and wine, and when He said, "This is my body," it does not indeed appear that He was misunderstood at the time; but there are many now who take His words literally, and who believe that He meant, that the bread ceasing to be bread, and the wine ceasing to be wine, were both changed into the real flesh and real blood of Christ. The error is of a similar kind, when persons, finding the Apostle Peter to speak of Christians as a "holy priesthood," understand him to teach the universal priesthood of believers, that is, that all Christians are priests in the true and literal sense.

The first vague hint of this error is found in Irenæus, who, if the ordinary reading is correct, has this observation:—

"For all the righteous possess the sacerdotal rank."[1]

But it is possible that he may mean no more than Peter meant, when he called Christians a "royal priesthood." Tertullian, however, is more explicit when he says:—

"Are not even we laics priests? It is written, 'A kingdom also, and priests to His God and Father, hath He made us.' It is the authority of the Church, and the honour which has acquired sanctity through the joint session of the order, which has established the difference between the order and the laity. Accordingly, where there is no joint session of the ecclesiastical order, you offer, and baptize, and are priest alone for yourself. For where three are, a Church is, albeit they be laics."[2]

This testimony is clear to the fact that a marked difference had sprung up as early as the beginning of the third century between the members of the Church and its officers,

[1] *Heresies*, iv. 8. 3. [2] *Exhortation to Chastity*, chap. vii.

who were regarded as a separate order. This difference he ascribes, not to any divine precept, but to "the authority of the Church." That he held the real and literal priesthood of believers, is apparent in his claiming for them Church rights where three laymen only are present, and from his saying that in the absence of a session of Church officers, they, as priests, have a right to offer and baptize.

During the Middle Ages the priesthood of the clergy stood out so prominently as to overshadow the supposed priesthood of the laity; but the latter idea was never entirely lost, and amid the revulsion from ecclesiastical rule which found such hot expression at the Reformation, Luther came forth with such extreme statements as these:—

"Every Christian man is a priest, and every Christian woman a priestess, whether they be young or old, master or servant, mistress or maid, scholar or illiterate."

"All Christians are, properly speaking, members of the clerical order, and there is no difference between them except that they hold different offices."

"If a company of pious Christian laymen were captured and sent to a desert place, and had not among them an ordained priest, and were all agreed in the matter, and elected one, and told him to baptize, celebrate mass, absolve and preach, such an one would be as true a priest as if all the bishops and popes had ordained him."

"All Christians are priests; all may teach God's word, administer baptism, consecrate the bread and wine; for Christ has said, 'Do this in remembrance of me.'" [1]

The brave and impetuous Reformer, stung by the assumptions of the priesthood of his own time, gave strong expression to his first impressions, without considering the nature of the authority furnished in Scripture for his statements, and without considering at length the inferences which others might draw from his words. There is reason to think that at a later point in his life, his opinions on this subject were considerably modified.

In times still more recent, Neander reverts so often to the

[1] See Hagenbach's *History of Doctrines*, § 255. 4, where these and other citations, with their sources, are given.
Michelet's *Life of Luther*, Bk. ii. chap. 2.

subject of the universal priesthood of believers, that his readers are in danger of accepting it as a cardinal and admitted doctrine of Christianity, instead of what it simply is, a doubtful inference drawn from a metaphor used in a single chapter of Holy Scripture. But when that good and learned man comes to interpret the passage from which the inference is drawn, he understands it exactly as we do, namely, that Christians are priests in a figurative sense, that is, they are under obligation to render spiritual service to God.[1] But no man is justified in inferring from a passage of Scripture which means no more than this, that the distinction between official and non-official members of the Church is unauthorized, and that private members have, on the ground of their being priests, a right to administer the sacraments. It is not a doctrine of Christianity in any true sense, which has no better foundation than a mere figure of speech. All admit that a true Christian is like a priest in this, that he is under obligation to present spiritual sacrifices to God; but to found on the metaphor expressing this truth such a doctrine as the universal priesthood of believers, and to infer that ordinary Church members may on this ground assume the ordinary functions of the ministry at their pleasure, is a doctrine both false and mischievous. The universal priesthood of believers, like transubstantiation or the primacy of Peter, has no better foundation than a metaphor in Scripture, and no truth of God is ever made to rest only on a figure of speech.

ALLEGED PRIESTHOOD OF THE CLERGY.

It is remarkable that the word priest (*ἱερεύς*, *sacerdos*) is never applied in the New Testament to the ministry, as distinguished from the members of the Christian Church. The name is indeed often applied in the literal sense to the ministers of the Old Testament economy, as well as to pagan officials who offered animals at the altar. It is often applied to the Lord Jesus in virtue of the great sacrifice which He offered on Calvary once for all, and also in a metaphorical sense to all Christians, who take Christ to be their Lord, and devote themselves to the work of rendering to Him spiritual

[1] *History of the Planting*, Bk. iii. chap. 5.

service. But the remarkable fact is, that the word is never by the New Testament writers applied in any sense, literal or figurative, to an apostle, evangelist, prophet, presbyter, bishop, pastor, or to any officer of the Christian Church.

The work of the great High Priest being complete in itself and not needing repetition, the ministry of the Christian Church had no such burden laid upon them as to offer sacrifices for sin. Their functions were of a very different kind. They had to announce to men the love of God manifested to sinners in the mission of His Son; they dwelt on the nature and value of the sacrifice offered upon Calvary; and they called upon men to believe in a High Priest who had already "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." The work of the ministry, as described in the New Testament, is to preach the gospel, govern the congregation, conduct divine worship, administer ordinances, and to aim at the edification of believers, the conversion of the world, and the glory of God. Ministers of the gospel are not priests, and do not, like the sons of Aaron, need to offer up daily sacrifices; they are rather the authorized servants of God, commissioned to declare the will of Him who "needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people; for this He did once, when He offered up Himself." Even when he administers the Supper, and thus presides at the commemoration of a sacrifice, he gives thanks and blesses, and presents to the guests around the table the symbols of the Redeemer's love; but even in these most solemn and serious circumstances, he is never described in Scripture as a priest. That would not be a true description of his character. On the contrary, the Christian minister is in Scripture designated by such terms as elder, pastor, teacher, bishop, deacon, labourer—terms none of which conveys any sacerdotal idea whatever.

Bellarmine admits that the Christian minister is never in the New Testament termed a priest; but he attempts to account for it by saying that the inspired writers avoided this mode of speech while the temple was yet standing, lest the Christian priesthood should be confounded with the Jewish priesthood, who were still a well-known element in society.[1]

[1] *De Romano Pontifice*, lib. iii. cap. xiii., in *Opera*, vol. i. p. 367c.

But the strange thing is, that no considerations of the kind suggested by the Cardinal induced the inspired writers to avoid the use of the term *elders* to designate certain officers in the Christian Church, although Jewish elders were at the time well known in every city where a synagogue existed. There were Christian prophets; although Jewish prophets, whose writings were publicly read in the synagogue every Sabbath day, were not unknown. Such words as passover, propitiation, sacrifice, Zion, were all Jewish terms in daily use to express Christian ideas. The word *priest* is literally applied to Christ Himself, and in a figurative sense to His people, as we have already seen; and had the name been in any way appropriate to the work or position of the Christian minister, there was no sound reason why it also should not be applied. But it is certainly strange, considering how much has since been made out of the term, that it was never applied in Scripture to any order of ministers in the Christian Church. The Christian minister is a priest in no sense different from that in which a Christian layman is a priest. Scripture never represents him as offering sacrifice at the altar, nor even as hearing confessions, prescribing penance, or granting absolution.[1]

EXAMINATION OF PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE.

The inspired writers, familiar from childhood with the details of sacrificial worship, so well calculated to make deep impression on unsophisticated minds, often described the more spiritual worship of gospel times in figurative language, borrowed from the ceremonials of that other worship constantly presented to their eyes. These passages, literally interpreted, many now understand as if they countenanced a sacrificial worship in the gospel period, and infer from them

[1] The argument by which Hooker attempts to justify the application of the term *priest* to a Christian minister indicates in itself the difficulties of the case. "Seeing then that sacrifice is now no part of the Church ministry, how should the name of priesthood be thereunto rightly applied? Surely, as even St. Paul *applieth the name of flesh unto that very substance of fishes*, which hath a proportionable correspondence to flesh, *although it be in nature another thing*." *Ecc. Polity*, v. 78. That correspondence or resemblance justifies the figurative application of the term priest, but not its use as the ordinary designation of a Christian minister.

that the idea of a clerical priesthood is implied and encouraged. These texts of the divine word, properly understood, do not, however, give any real support to the sacerdotal idea.

Malachi (i. 11) has these words: "For, from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense is offered unto my name, and a pure offering." Sacerdotalists argue that these words afford prophetic intimation that in gospel times the mass would be universally offered, and that the mass, of necessity, implies a priesthood. But this reasoning does not appear to us conclusive.

The mass (*missa*) is the old Latin name for a simple religious service; it is only in the early mediæval age that it came to signify a religious service in which the Eucharist is administered—a sense which it still retains. The Eucharist, or Supper, was at the first regarded only as the commemoration of a sacrifice, but in course of time it came to be regarded by ignorance and superstition as the unbloody repetition of what occurred on the cross—as, in fact, a sacrifice itself. This imported a new signification to the mass which did not originally belong to it; the religious service of the mass henceforth in the estimation of men embodied a sacrifice, and required a priest to present it. But there is no evidence that this idea was present to the mind of the prophet. The name of God is great among the Gentiles, not through the mass, which imports into the simple religious service of the apostolic age the idea of sacrifice that did not find a place in a commemorative ordinance, and which is conducted in a language that the multitude do not understand; but God's name is great among the Gentiles by the preaching of the gospel, which announces to them a salvation that reveals the glory of God, and which, so soon as men believe, they fall down and worship; they pray to God, they praise Him, and offer to Him the sacrifices of a broken heart, and all the spiritual services already described. Though the Jew fail of his duty, God will not be robbed of His glory, for in every part of the world "incense," that is, prayer (Rev. viii. 3), and a "pure offering," spiritual worship and service, will be presented to Him. The true heart and life service that the saints of all lands in the gospel day will present to God, is the idea

before the prophet's mind when he uses the figurative language: "In every place incense is offered unto my name, and a pure offering." The idea of priesthood is not therefore necessarily implied in the words.

In Acts xiii. 2 we read, "As they ministered [λειτουργούντων] to the Lord, and fasted." Although Jerome and the Rhemish Version both interpret this as the English versions do, there are others who understand λειτουργέω in the sense of sacrificing, and interpret the word as meaning *to say mass*.

This idea is not suggested by the derivation of the word [λαός, *the people*, and ἔργον, *a work*], nor by its New Testament use. Its various occurrences in the New Testament show that it means simply to *minister* or *serve*, and does not convey any sacerdotal idea whatever. It is the context which must suggest the nature of the service; or the same thing is done by what is known of the functions of the ministers of whom the passage speaks. When Paul wishes the Gentile Christians to contribute money for the poor saints at Jerusalem, he supports his request by saying, "They [the Gentiles] owe it to them also to *minister* [λειτουργῆσαι] unto them in carnal things" (Rom. xv. 27). Here any idea of sacrificing, and still more of saying mass, is out of the question. He writes also to the Philippians (ii. 30) that their messenger Epaphroditus hazarded his life "to supply that which was lacking in your *service* [λειτουργίας] towards me." The service expressed by the word in this passage was simply personal help, not the presentation of sacrifice, or the performance of any public ceremonial. The word in the New Testament age was used to express the performance of any service whatever, whether the service is that of a Jewish or pagan priest at the altar, or that of a Christian teacher instructing the Church, or of people contributing to the help of the poor, or that of the angels in ministering to the heirs of salvation. A word actually used in the New Testament to express all these different kinds of ministration can have little sacerdotal flavour about it. But at a later period, after the presiding presbyter or bishop had become a priest, the communion table an altar, and the Lord's Supper was regarded as a sacrifice to God, the word λειτουργέω, *to minister*, still continued to be used, and

henceforth came in the public eye to be identified with that particular kind of service. It is the original word from which our common word *liturgy* is derived. Thus it was that the idea of sacrifice came to be associated with the word; but Chrysostom, who wrote in the fifth century, and spoke the Greek language as his native tongue, interprets it in the sense of preaching. The word simply conveys that the persons spoken of in Acts xiii. 2 were engaged in performing their public functions; it is from other passages of Scripture we are to learn what these functions were. They were "prophets and teachers," as we learn from the context; but the function of a teacher in the Church is to give religious instruction, whether by prayer or preaching, and the function of "a prophet" is to give inspired instruction. We cannot therefore be wrong in saying, that the peculiar kind of ministration with which they were occupied at Antioch was the instruction of the Church.

In Rom. xv. 16 we have another passage on which it is sought to found an argument to the same effect: "The grace that was given me of God that I should be a minister [λειτουργός] of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles, ministering [ἱερουργοῦντα] the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles [προσφορὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν] might be made acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost."

But the argument founded on these words is of no weight. The term λειτουργός is indeed applied by the apostle to himself as one who ministers, but it is subject to the explanation given as to its use in our comment on Acts xiii. 2. Even if the marginal rendering of ἱερουργοῦντα, "ministering *by sacrifice* the gospel of God," was accurate, its want of intelligibility here, and its inconsistency with the other representations of the spiritual worship of the New Testament, would be fatal to the argument. But the fact is that ἱερουργέω simply means to *perform sacred rites*, leaving the reader to learn from the context or the circumstances of the case what the nature of these rites may be. When applied, therefore, to a Christian minister, we are not at liberty to understand it as ministering *by sacrifice*, as we might understand in the case of a Jewish or pagan priest, except it first be shown that offering sacrifice is one of the functions of a Christian minister.

Besides, it is obvious that the offering spoken of (*προσφορά*) is not a sacrifice in the literal sense. The thing offered could not be literally offered; it is human beings, the Gentiles, who are supposed to be, through the ministry of the gospel, presented to God. Souls purified from sin through faith in that gospel which he preaches, are indeed the highest and noblest gifts that a minister can offer to God; but they are not sacrifices in the literal sense, nor is he who presents them a priest in the literal sense. If clerical priesthood be a divine fact, there must be produced in its favour better evidence than a figure of speech.

1 Cor. iv. 1: "Let a man so account of us, as of ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." By "mysteries" Romish writers understand sacraments; and as sacraments in their view require to be administered by priests, they regard this passage as favouring their notion of a clerical priesthood.

But the word does not mean sacraments, nor sacrifices, nor even ordinances, according to its use in the New Testament. There is nothing in the context to indicate that it refers to baptism or to the Eucharist. In none of its occurrences in the New Testament has the word this meaning; though instances of the word in this sense, we admit, are to be found in Gregory Nazianzen, John of Damascus, and later Fathers.[1] Its meaning is a *secret thing* not known to all. In its scriptural application it refers to doctrine, not to rites. It is a truth undiscoverable by reason or other means, and originally hidden from men, but which God either has already revealed or is about to reveal; and into the knowledge of which truth men can be introduced. The incarnation is one of these mysteries; so is the union of Jew and Gentile in one Church, the union of believers with Christ, the resurrection of the saints, and the very gospel itself (Rom. xvi. 25; Eph. iii. 9, v. 32, vi. 19; Col. i. 26, 27; 1 Cor. xv. 51). Apostles and ministers are stewards of these mysteries, that is, dispensers and distributors, expounders and proclaimers of these truths. This is borne out by every occurrence of the word in the New Testament. It invariably denotes doctrines, not rites or sacraments. It was a later use of the word to apply it to the sacraments,

[1] Suicer under the word *μυστήριον*.

when it became common to regard them as secret rites which outsiders were not allowed to witness. Men made mysteries out of sacraments, but nothing mysterious attached to these simple and holy rites as they were instituted by Christ. The apostles in their teaching, both written and oral, did not seek to establish, but only to make known, mysteries, and thus to cast fresh light on what had been dark before. They did not designedly keep back from Christians any truth which God had revealed to them. What was told them in the secret chamber, they were to announce upon the house-top. The philosopher may exercise his creative power and originate the maxim which he propounds and propagates; but the ministers of Christ are not permitted even to attempt to manufacture truth; their office is simply to communicate to others those truths which God by His word and Spirit has first communicated to them. In that point of view they are "stewards of the mysteries of God;" but that is a very different thing from being priests.

Another passage quoted in the same connection is 1 Cor. x. 18–20: "Behold Israel after the flesh: have not they which eat the sacrifices communion with the altar? What say I then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God: and I would not that ye should have communion with devils."

But the sacrifices and altar spoken of here are either Jewish or pagan; and the idea of the apostle is, that as participation in the Supper implies communion with Christ, so participation in a pagan sacrifice by eating of things offered to an idol implies communion with devils. But this does not necessarily imply that the Christian ordinance is a sacrifice, as the pagan and Jewish rites most certainly are; and still less that the Lord's table is a true altar, or a Christian minister a priest. The point of resemblance is in the participation. Participation in the Christian rite results in communion with Christ: participation in the pagan rite results in communion with devils. The act of participation is common to both; but the Christian ordinance is as different in its nature from the pagan sacrifice, as are the two persons into whose communion each introduces its partakers.

No additional light is cast upon the subject by Phil. ii. 17: "If I am offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." Here the sacrifice and the offering are both figurative. It is the faith of the Philippian Christians, to whom the apostle writes, which constitutes the sacrifice; Paul himself is the drink-offering poured out upon the sacrifice. The same is true also of the parallel passage, 2 Tim. iv. 6, in which he describes himself as ready to be offered to God. There is no real, only a figurative offering in either case. We cannot argue from it as to the official position of the person by whom such an offering is presented. The passage, therefore, does not touch the point to be proved, even in the remotest degree.

The last of these passages is Heb. xiii. 10: "It is good that the heart be established by grace; not by meats, wherein they that occupied themselves were not profited. We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." The advocates of priesthood in the Church accept this passage literally; what could be more evident, they say —"we have an altar"? and if so, then a sacrifice to lay upon the altar, and a priest to offer it.

But we cannot agree that this text is to be literally understood; if so, it would describe a state of things entirely out of harmony with the other representations of the New Testament. The words, indeed, are capable of a literal sense, and we would not hesitate to take them in that sense, if it were at all in keeping with what we read elsewhere in the New Testament Scriptures. The figurative sense only is in harmony with the surroundings. The meaning we believe to be this — meats are unprofitable in a religious sense, yet they were connected with a dispensation whose distinctive characteristic is the altar, and they supplied sustenance to those who were engaged in serving at the altar. "We have an altar" also, the inspired writer states. That altar is the cross, upon which the great Christian sacrifice was offered up; the flesh and blood of Christ, to use the imagery of John vi., are the food of the soul. He is the bread of life to us and to all believers who are admitted to the privilege of fellowship with Him. But they who serve at the Jewish tabernacle have no right to this spiritual food, because their continuing to take part in that

superseded worship is virtually the rejection of Christ. The words, therefore, are capable of a good and natural sense, which does not set them at variance with the representations of Christian worship set forth by the New Testament writers.[1]

None of these passages, rightly interpreted, affirms or even implies the doctrine of a clerical priesthood. The inspired teachers of Christianity had in no case such an idea before their minds; but in expounding Christian sentiments they allude to practices common alike to Jewish and pagan worship, with which they and their readers were familiar, and in which sacrifice was the central fact. These figurative allusions are seized upon by the advocates of a clerical priesthood in order to sustain their case; but the very fact that they are under necessity so to do suggests that they have no solid ground on which to build. Clement of Alexandria describes this style of reasoning as characteristic of the false teachers of his time: "Selecting," he says, "ambiguous expressions, they wrest them to their own opinions, gathering a few expressions here and there; not looking to the sense, but making use of the mere words."[2] Arguments of this kind are usually far-fetched and thin, and they fail to convince. Had a human priesthood been divinely set up in the ministry of the apostolic Church, it would have left some track upon the literature of the time. It would have been somewhere directly and substantially stated in plain words. It would not be buried out of sight among figures of speech.

REASONS FOR REJECTING A CLERICAL PRIESTHOOD.

Our reasons, then, for believing that a clerical priesthood is not a divine institution in the Christian Church are as follow:—

1. We do not find the doctrine taught in the New Testament.

2. The word *priest*, in its true sense of one who offers

[1] "If" says Bishop Lightfoot, "on this noble scriptural language a false superstructure has been reared, we have here only one instance out of many, where the truth has been impaired by transferring statements from the region of metaphor to the region of fact." *Philippians*, p. 260.

[2] *Stromata*, vii. 16.

sacrifice, is by the Scriptures applied to no official in the Christian Church, except only to the Lord Jesus, our King and Priest, who in His own body presented the one great sacrifice for sin, and who now in heaven continues to intercede for His saints.

3. Scripture, beyond what it says figuratively of all believers, is quite silent as to priesthood in the ministry. A man in the Christian Church who holds any grade of office, is by divine authority a priest in no sense different from any other Christian man or woman. All believers, whether in office or out of it, are priests in this sense only, that they are separated from the world to the service of Christ, and are bound to render to Him spiritual service and duty.

4. The presbyters or pastors of the apostolic age have no sacerdotal functions assigned them in the New Testament. They are never represented as standing at an altar, offering sacrifice, presiding at the confessional, or pronouncing absolution. In this respect they stand out in marked contrast to the priests of paganism, who were well provided with temples, altars, and victims. The same might be said of the Jewish priests, except that in the Holy Land there was but one temple and one altar. They differed also in their mode of appointment; a Christian bishop was ordained with the simple rite of laying on hands by the presbytery, whereas the Jewish priest was consecrated with the holy oil.

5. Priesthood in the Christian ministry is not necessary, owing to the fact that the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross is perfect, and needs not to be repeated. By that sacrifice divine justice is satisfied. By the blood of the cross the way into the holiest is laid open. Christ is a Priest for ever, and His priesthood is unchangeable; therefore a human priest is not required to offer up what the Romish Catechism calls "a true propitiatory sacrifice, by which God is appeased and rendered propitious to us." God is appeased and is already propitious; therefore nothing remains for an earthly priest to do.

6. Only two orders of priesthood are sanctioned by Scripture—the order of Aaron and the order of Melchisedec. None could legitimately belong "to the former who was not in the line of hereditary descent from the tribe" of Levi and the

family of Aaron. None but Christ belongs to the latter, the prototype of which was "without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life." A Christian priest belongs neither to the one order nor to the other. Of what order, then, is he? Can any order be assigned him? Can divine authority be claimed for his appointment? What right has any mere human priest now to assume an official position not claimed either by an apostle or by any other minister of the New Testament Church?

7. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in writing to people who, in accepting the Christian religion, had parted from a real priesthood, a real altar, and a real sacrifice, might have consoled them with the assurance that they had in their new connection received another and a better human priesthood, who differed from the Aaronic only in regard to ritual and the nature of the offering. This he would naturally have done on the supposition that there is a priesthood established among the officers of the New Testament Church, for it lay directly in his way. But he never touches that point. On the contrary, all through the Epistle he keeps before them the one Priest only (Heb. x. 11–14). Is there not strong evidence in this, that the idea of a merely human priesthood in the Christian Church is foreign to the spirit of the New Testament?

8. It is also worthy of note that we have in the Christian Scriptures three Pastoral Epistles — the Epistles addressed to Timothy and Titus, who, if the sacerdotal hypothesis is correct, were possessed of priestly as well as of episcopal functions; yet the apostle addresses nothing to either one or other that he might not say to any minister of the gospel holding a temporary appointment to act in his room. Timothy and Titus are not instructed as to the approved manner of performing sacerdotal duties. No directions are given as to vestments, the form or position of the altar, or the manner in which the sacrifice is to be offered. Timothy is not furnished with an apostolic sacramentary; nor is Titus informed of the immense spiritual importance and significance of the eastward position. He is told neither to face his audience nor to turn his back upon them—all of them matters about which a true priest would be rather particular. Yet in these short Epistles the apostle finds room to speak of things not of so much

consequence. It is in these letters he mentions "the cloak" he left at Troas. The impression produced by what the Pastoral Epistles say, but especially by what they omit, is that some ecclesiastical matters which now bulk largely to the clerical eye were very small matters then. It is the idea of priesthood among the clergy afterwards introduced which makes the difference.

9. Let it be noted also how completely the sacerdotal notion is at variance with the ordinary representations of the ministerial office given in the New Testament. Quite a different idea of the office is woven into the texture of apostolic teaching. The ambassadors of God to men commend themselves, not by regularity in saying mass, in presenting a daily sacrifice on the altar, or in attending to all the forms prescribed for such a ceremonial, but by exhibiting clearly the truths of salvation; or, as one of the greatest of them puts it, "by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor. iv. 2). The "workman that needeth not to be ashamed," is not he who sits daily at the confessional inquiring into acts of sin, or who stands at the altar presenting unbloody offerings to God, but it is he who "handles aright the word of truth" (2 Tim. ii. 15). The apostolic malediction does not fall on the head of him who has the temerity to administer sacraments without being "priested;" it is of him who preaches "any other gospel" that Paul says, "Let him be anathema" (Gal. i. 8). Among the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers whom the risen Redeemer has bestowed as gifts upon the Church (Eph. iv. 11), he does not mention priests; and John does not present as the symbol of the new dispensation a high priest or pontiff clad in gorgeous vestments and swinging a censer before the golden altar, but an angel having the everlasting gospel to announce to them that dwell upon the earth not the priest who, with face turned away from men, mutters something that none understand except himself, but the bright celestial Spirit who proclaims with a loud voice that all may hear him, "Fear God, and give Him glory" (Rev. xiv. 6, 7).[1]

[1] See Dr. Enoch Mellor's *Lectures on Priesthood*—a valuable treatise, to which this chapter is much indebted.

10. Priesthood in Christianity is no doubt a very ancient notion. It can be traced up historically, as we have seen, to Tertullian, who lived at the close of the second century. But the sentiments of the Church, except endorsed by the approval of inspired men, can, however ancient, impose no obligation on the subsequent ages. We hold ourselves bound implicitly to receive what is laid down for our guidance in the Holy Scriptures; but there is no reason why we should be bound by Tertullian and Cyprian any further than their opinion or the opinion of the Church in their time commends itself to our own judgment. Tertullian himself could not feel offended with us for acting on his own maxim, "That which is first delivered is of the Lord, and is true; whilst that is strange and false which was afterwards introduced." [1]

11. Sacerdotalism helps to create and foster the erroneous notion that a minister by his service at the altar, and that the worshipper by his presence at the ceremonial, each performs a meritorious work which gives him claim for reward. This view is supported by the following statements of the *Trent Catechism*:—

"This sacrament is not only a treasure of heavenly riches, which, if we turn to good account, *will obtain for us the grace and love of God;* but it also possesses a peculiar character, by which we are *enabled to make some return to God* for the immense benefits bestowed upon us.

"The sacred and holy sacrifice of the Mass is not a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving only, or a mere commemoration of the sacrifice performed on the cross, but also truly a propitiatory sacrifice by which God is appeased and rendered propitious to us. If, therefore, with a pure heart, a lively faith, and affected with an inward sorrow for our transgressions, we immolate and offer this most holy victim, we shall without doubt obtain mercy from the Lord, and grace in time of need; for so delighted is the Lord with the odour of this victim, that, bestowing on us the gift of grace and repentance, He pardons our sins. Hence this usual prayer of the Church: 'As often as the commemoration of this victim is celebrated, so often is the work of our salvation being done;' that is to say, through this unbloody sacrifice flow to us the most plenteous fruits of that bloody victim.

[1] *On Prescription*, chap. xxxi.

"That by the Eucharist are remitted and pardoned lighter sins, commonly called venial sins, should not be matter of doubt.

"It must be taught that to priests alone has been given power to consecrate and administer to the faithful the holy Eucharist." [1]

It thus appears, from perhaps the least exceptionable of peculiarly Roman formularies, that a sacrament, which a priest alone can consecrate and administer, enables a man to make some return to God for His benefits, procures for him the grace and love of God, and secures for him the remission of his lighter sins. This encourages trust in men and in ordinances, and leads the mind of the sinner away from Jesus. People are thus induced to rest their hope of pardon and salvation, not on the one great sacrifice of Calvary, but on a rite which none except a priest can administer. This obscures the gospel remedy for sin, and makes it far more difficult for men to find out the great truth of God, that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

12. Priesthood, in a variety of other ways, has been a source of evil to the Church. Not only has it drawn the thoughts of men from the great sacrifice, and led them to ascribe undue efficacy to the memorial of it, but it has widened immensely the chasm between the ministry and the people, converting the position of the former in the estimation of many into that of a clerical caste. It has thus helped to produce in the ignorant a superstitious dread of the clergy—an influence which may not be always used for beneficial ends. It inspires the clergy who regard themselves as priests with pride, which does no real good to themselves, and produces in them sometimes an offensive attitude to other Christians. A sample of this spirit is given in an extract quoted from a Protestant Episcopal writer by Dr. Smyth of Charleston: "Such, therefore, as have laid aside ordination by the highest grade of the ministry, and substituted in its place ordination by the second grade, have *lost the sacerdotal office;* and *this office being essential to the very existence of the Church,* they can no longer be regarded as *in a Church state.*" [2] Thus it is that

[1] *Catechism of Trent,* Part II. chap. iv. questions 66, 75, 50, and 61. The English is taken from Buckley's translation.

[2] *Apostolic Succession,* Lecture vii. p. 155.

one whose only title to the ministry is that he was priested by a prelate speaks of another who was ordained, like Timothy, "with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."

13. The effects of sacerdotalism upon divine worship have been no less serious. It has corrupted the simplicity of the scriptural form. It has turned the table into an altar, and the Lord's Supper into a sacrifice. This has led to an idolatrous veneration for the bread and wine, under the mistaken impression that the symbols of the body are in reality the flesh and blood of the Lord. The whole thing has produced among intelligent men the impression that there is no truth in the Christian worship as it is in some Churches presented to the eye. Everything is represented as different from what men see it to be. People are told of an unbloody sacrifice; but they see no victim. They hear of an altar; but it is only a table, on which no blood is shed and no life taken away. The officiating minister is called a priest; but he is in reality no priest, for it is only bread and wine that he offers to God. What he offers to God is in reality not a sacrifice in any true sense of that word, but the memorials of a sacrifice which was offered for the sins of men eighteen hundred years ago, and which never by any possibility can be offered again. Christ could not offer Himself again without suffering again. Perpetual sacrifice is perpetual suffering. The one great offering for sin may be remembered, but it cannot be repeated.

Thus it is that the sacerdotal idea, which has mingled so thoroughly with the religious opinions of men for so many ages, is not a scriptural truth, but a mere human error, the first germ of which cannot be traced to any earlier period than the end of the second century. From that hour till this it has held its place, and is still widespread in its presence and effects. At this moment it is in full bloom in the Greek and Roman Churches, and exists to a very large extent in the Anglican communion. At its entrance the idea seemed innocent enough, and for a time may have operated beneficially, in so far as it secured a greater respect for the clergy, and greater attention to their message. But in its results the effect has been pernicious. Sacerdotalism has

exercised a deteriorating influence on the ministry, it has destroyed the purity of the primitive worship, alienated Christian ministers from each other, and has substituted a false object of veneration to the membership of the Church instead of the dead and living Christ. To a principle of this nature, and attended with such effects, true Christianity can never be reconciled.

CHAPTER II.—PENANCE.

THE ROMISH DOCTRINE.

THE doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church in regard to Penance is stated at length in the *Canons* and *Decrees* of the Council of Trent, and in the *Catechism* founded on these decrees.[1]

From the statements there contained, we gather that Penance is a certain compensation for sins committed against God; that it is necessary to salvation for those who have fallen after baptism; that its purpose is to wipe away every fault and stain of the soul, to satisfy the Divine Being for the sins committed, and to enable man to reinstate himself in the favour of God, whom he has offended. The acts of the penitent himself, contrition, confession, and satisfaction, are the matter of the sacrament and the different parts of penance; but the form in which its force mainly consists, is contained in the words of the minister—"I absolve thee from all thy sins."

The Church of Rome commands all the faithful to confess their sins at least once a year; and for this confession the season of Lent is specially recommended. This confession is instituted by the Lord, and is of divine right necessary to all who have fallen into sin after baptism. Christ, when about to ascend to heaven, left priests His own vicars as presidents and judges, before whom are to be confessed all the mortal crimes into which the faithful in Christ may have fallen. The priests pronounce a judicial decision in such cases; but this they cannot do without the penitent's making known to the confessor each and every sin, with the view of enabling him to form an accurate judgment, and award to every crime a

[1] See Session xiv. *Decrees*, on Penance, chaps. 1–9; *Canons*, 1–15; and *Catechism*, Part ii. chap. 5.

just limit and proportion of punishment. No one can gain admission into heaven unless its gates be opened by the priests, to whose fidelity the Lord has confided its keys.

The words—"whose sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose ye shall retain, they are retained," are addressed evidently not to all, but to the apostles only, to whom in this function priests succeed. Their power is not simply to declare a person to be absolved from his sins, but as the ministers of God they really absolve: and those who confess cherish confidence that their sins are forgiven them: while the *Catechism* expressly states that "there is no crime, however grievous, however revolting, which the sacrament of penance does not remit, not once only, but often and repeatedly."[1]

Satisfaction as a part of penance is, according to the same authority, the compensation by which a man makes some reparation to God for the sins he has committed. It is the full payment of what is enough, though what is enough seems to lack nothing. Men are enabled through Christ to make some satisfaction to God, by punishments for sin voluntarily undertaken by themselves, by punishments imposed at the discretion of the priest according to the measure of their delinquency, or by temporal scourges inflicted of God, and endured patiently by them.

There are two redeeming points in the doctrine thus laid down by the Roman authorities for which its authors should receive due credit. The first is, that they acknowledge the force and utility of contrition, which it defines to be "a sorrow of mind, and a detestation for the sin committed, with the purpose of not sinning for the future,"—a definition substantially the same as that which we give to repentance; this, it says, was at every time necessary for obtaining the pardon of sins, and, in a man who has fallen after baptism, helps to prepare him for it. The second is, that the Council of Trent expressly states that "No Catholic ever thought that by this kind of satisfaction on our part the virtue of the merit and of the satisfaction of our Lord Jesus is either obscured, or to any extent lessened."[2]

Making full allowance for these admissions, in so far as

[1] *Catechism*, ii. 5. 18. [2] Session xiv. Penance, chap. 8.

they assert that repentance or contrition was at every time necessary for obtaining pardon, and that it is not intended that the virtue of the merit and satisfaction of our Lord Jesus ought to be diminished, the Roman doctrine of penance seems objectionable in the following respects :—

1. That penance is declared to be necessary for salvation to those who have sinned after baptism.

2. That a formal confession once a year is required from all in membership with the Church.

3. That sins and the circumstances of sins are to be made known to persons in secret, and to persons not personally injured by them.

4. That priests are to sit in judgment upon people, and to fix on behalf of God the punishment to be awarded to sin.

5. That any man is entitled to say to his fellow-man—" I absolve thee from all thy sins."

6. That priests succeed apostles in the function of forgiving sins.

7. That none can be admitted to heaven except the priest opens the gates with his keys.

8. That the priest has power to forgive the most heinous sins in so far as they offend God.

9. That after Christ has made satisfaction for sin, there is still more satisfaction that a sinner can make for himself.

10. That man can by suffering reinstate himself in the favour of God.

11. That man can make to God reparation for sin committed against Him.

12. That any such confessions, absolutions, or satisfactions as this sacrament requires, are of divine right.

There is nothing which we can find in Holy Scripture that obliges us to believe that any of these statements is true.

THE ANGLICAN DOCTRINE.

Penance finds no place in the Anglican system ; but there is in it a modified form of confession and absolution, which may be resorted to in special circumstances.

The advice given by the Book of Common Prayer to a man who prior to " Communion " cannot quiet his own conscience

is—"Let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned minister of God's word, and open His grief, that by the ministry of God's holy word He may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice."

Again, in the "Visitation of the Sick" we read:—

"Here shall the sick person be moved to make a special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. After which confession, the priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and heartily desire it) after this sort: Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to His Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of His great mercy forgive thee thine offences; and by His authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The Formularies of the Anglican Church do not pledge her ministers to any other kind of confession and absolution than to that stated in the words now cited from the Communion Service, and the Service for the Visitation of the Sick, however ambiguously or erroneously some of her divines may have spoken on the subject.[1] It would not be fair, however, to hold a whole Church responsible for the opinions of individual theologians, however eminent; it is the Formularies publicly recognised by the body which constitute the fair test of her doctrine. It is only when the written standards of the Romish and English Churches are brought into comparison, that we see clearly what a great mass of error on the subject of penance the Anglican Church has entirely discarded. The whole idea of man making, or needing to make, to God any satisfaction for sin over and above that already made by the death of Christ, is set aside. A kind of confession and absolution is indeed retained, but the character of it is modified. The confessional is not wrought as part of a system; there are two cases only in which, according to the Formularies, confession is encouraged, namely, when a man prior to Communion requires some outside help to quiet his own conscience, or when a sick person feels his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. These are both exceptional

[1] See *Confession as taught by the Church of England*, by the Rev. C. N. Gray.

cases, and do not often occur. Even the absolution claimed for the Church is only to be pronounced if the sick person "humbly and heartily desire it." Neither is the confession required general; nor is the absolution, as in the Roman Church, necessary to salvation. Nevertheless the doctrine taught in the Anglican Formularies seems objectionable in these respects:—

1. That the Church has been left by Christ with power to absolve sinners who repent and believe.

2. That a sinner disturbed in conscience needs to come to a minister, that "by the ministry of God's holy word he may receive the benefit of absolution."

3. That any priest or minister has authority from Christ to say to the penitent, "I absolve thee from all thy sins."

The one great error which underlies all this teaching, is the unscriptural assumption that ministers have authority given them to pardon sin committed against God.[1]

THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE.

In order to see how very little warrant the Roman doctrine derives from Scripture, we reproduce the more important passages usually cited on the subject:—

Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, even all their sins.—LEV. xvi. 21.

My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, and make confession unto Him; and tell me now what thou hast done.—JOSH. vii. 19.

I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.—Ps. xxxii. 5.

He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy.—PROV. xxviii. 13.

Make confession unto the Lord, the God of your fathers, and do His pleasure.—EZRA x. 11.

Hearken unto the prayer of Thy servant . . . while I confess the

[1] See a paper signed by the late Dr. Pusey and other members of the high Ritualistic party in the Anglican Church, explanatory of the sense in which they understand Confession and Absolution to be taught in the Anglican Formularies. A copy of it is inserted in Mellor, *On the Priesthood*, Appendix E.

sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against Thee.—Neh. i. 6.

The seed of Israel . . . stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.—Neh. ix. 2.

I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God.—Dan. ix. 4.

Whiles I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God.—Dan. ix. 20.

Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.—Matt. iii. 2.

They were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.—Matt. iii. 6.

Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.—Matt. v. 24.

Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.—Luke xiii. 5.

If he sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him.—Luke xvii. 4.

He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.—John xx. 23.

Many also of them that had believed came, confessing and declaring their deeds.—Acts xix. 18.

Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee.—Acts viii. 22.

With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.—Rom. x. 10.

As I live, saith the Lord, to me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God.—Rom. xiv. 11.

Sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the many, so that contrariwise ye should rather forgive him and comfort him, lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. . . . But to whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also; for what I also have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything for your sakes, for your sakes have I forgiven it in the person of Christ.—2 Cor. ii. 6, 7, and 10, 11.

Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.—Jas. v. 16.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.—1 John i. 9.

If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.—1 John ii. 2.

THE IMPORT OF THESE PASSAGES.

1. *Confession.*

None of these passages favours the secret and stated confession of sin to a priest, or teaches that it is in his power to absolve from offences committed against God. But they do teach that confession in certain circumstances is a duty, and may result in spiritual benefit to the sinner. That confession may be made by the sinner on his own behalf, or on behalf of those whom he represents, it must express the sincere feeling of a humble and penitent heart. It must be accompanied with the resolve, relying on the strength of grace, not to sin any more. Above all, it must be addressed in every case to the person or society injured or offended by the sin; and in every case the person or society so offended has power to forgive the sin, so far as the said person or society is affected thereby. There is no case contemplated in any of the passages cited from Scripture which these principles will not explain.

1. The sin committed may injure an individual. We may designedly wound his person, hurt his feelings, deprive him of his property, or filch away his good name. In these, and in all similar cases, we do him damage, reparable or irreparable according to circumstances. The moment that we see our error, it is our duty to confess our fault, ask his forgiveness, and make any restitution or reparation that is in our power. We may not all be able to go so far as Zaccheus, who, if he exacted wrongfully anything from any man, was willing to "restore it fourfold;" but, till restitution is made, the offender has no right to expect forgiveness, because otherwise the person offended is not bound to believe that the confession is sincere. When this is done, the person offended is under obligation to forgive, and it is his duty to forgive, even till seventy times seven.

2. The sin may be an offence against civil society; that is, it may be an act forbidden by the sovereign power in the State—a crime to which the law of the land attaches punishment. To confess in such circumstances is to plead guilty.

This is what Achan was asked to do, when Joshua said to him—"Give glory to the Lord, and make confession unto Him, and tell me what thou hast done." Pardon in Achan's case did not follow confession; but that the civil ruler in such cases has the power to punish or to pardon, as he judges best for the good of the community which he represents, there cannot be a doubt.

3. The offence committed may be against the Church or Christian society. People in Church communion voluntarily come under obligation to believe certain doctrines, and to maintain a good moral character. But if a man fall into some gross error of doctrine or conduct, he violates the divine conditions of membership, and brings discredit on the society. He creates a scandal, and may justly be expelled for his sin. Afterwards, when grace is given him to repent, it is his duty to come before the society, or those who act for it in such cases, and to confess his offence; and it is in the power of the Church that was offended to forgive the penitent, and it is its duty to forgive him, and restore him to membership once more. This was the case of the incestuous man in 1 Cor. v. By the apostle's direction he was expelled from the Church; but on his repentance the Church forgave and restored him, lest "he should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow." The Church forgave him, and the apostle forgave him too (2 Cor. ii. 10). We infer from this that the Church, or the rulers who act on its behalf, can forgive an offence, in so far as that offence is injurious to the society. No other sins than those which affect the Church, and have brought expulsion on the doer, have Church rulers, acting for the Church, power to pardon; and that only so far as they affect the Church, not as they affect God.

4. All sin, indeed, is in one point of view committed against God; for whether others are offended by it or not, sin in every case is a violation of His law. All sin is to be confessed directly to Him, and it is one of the clauses of the New Covenant that He will freely pardon to believers all their sins (Heb. viii. 12). To the God and Father of all, the parent may come confessing his own sins and those of his family; or the minister may come confessing his sins and the sins of his congregation; or the ruler may come confessing his sins and

those of the nation; or the individual may come confessing sins that he shares with no man, and that are entirely his own; —all this can be done directly without the intervention of any, except of the great High Priest, the only Mediator between God and man.

5. Nobody can point out in the Scriptures any instance of an offender going to a Christian minister to confess his sins in secret, and to obtain from him personal pardon. It is not unusual in later times for penitents to seek absolution at the hands of persons whom they never offended, but there is no example of it in the New Testament.

We read of those who came to John's baptism, that "they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins." But this was a public, not a secret act. John was not a priest of any kind: the confession was not a detailed story of human guilt and shame, but such an admission of sin as is implied in the act of those who come publicly to seek a rite, submission to which is an acknowledgment of pollution. Lack of Scripture evidence alone tempts any man to found on this fact an argument for private sacerdotal confession.

The command so often given by the Lord to those whom He healed, to go and show themselves to the priest, is also a very different thing from sacerdotal confession. The priest in every such case was a Jewish priest, who held no official position whatever in connection with the Christian Church. It was cures, not sins, which on these occasions were to be shown. By submitting themselves to the priest's personal inspection, the testimony of a foe might be had to the reality of the miracle. We can see nothing in this to justify the penitent in going to a Christian minister to confess his sins and to seek God's pardon.

The passage, Acts xix. 18, gives no countenance to auricular confession. No doubt it is a confession of believers, a confession of special sins, and a confession made in presence of men; but it is not like auricular confession, made in secret, made to a priest, made formally at stated times, made to one appointed to sit in judgment on the degree of guilt, and to grant absolution. It is such an admission of guilt in the mass, as Christian people make in

public prayer, or on a day of humiliation. They were stimulated to do so on this special occasion under the impulse of fear, produced by what happened to the exorcist Jews who profaned the name of Christ. Calvin, when commenting on the passage, shows the sharp contrast which such a general confession as this presents to the ordinary Romish confession. This act done by the Ephesians, he says, was a solitary case; whereas Romanists are required to make confession once a year. The statement indeed does not make it impossible absolutely that they confessed more than once; but it is not said that either they or any other Christians of the time did so, and what is not in evidence cannot be reasoned upon as a fact. These people confessed of their own accord; but the Pope by ecclesiastical statute binds his people to confess whether they feel or do not feel the burden of sin. Romanists, though acting under their own law, may indeed confess voluntarily, and without doubt many of them do so; but if the act is voluntary and universal, what need is there of the law? Christians in the apostolic age humbled themselves before God in presence of their brethren; whereas now people go to the confessional and whisper the story of their guilt privately into the ear of a priest. Even in the ages succeeding that of the apostles, people seeking absolution from the Church cast themselves publicly at the feet of the clergy. That was supposed to be in compliance with Acts xix. 18; if so, why is more needed now?

The words, "Confess your sins one to another," is quoted to show that there is divine authority for sinners making confession, and making it to men. We deny neither. There is a variety of cases, as already pointed out, when it is the duty of a man to confess to his fellow-man, and when it may afford a sort of relief to the burdened conscience so to do. In such cases an offended brother may grant his own forgiveness, and a spiritual brother, or guide, may instruct and pray with the penitent. This can be done with advantage in everyday life without the intervention of any sacerdotalism whatever. The context shows that the elders are to pray for the sick, not the sick for the elders, because the elders are so commanded; but when it says, "Confess your faults one to another," priests or elders are thereby as much com-

manded to confess to the people as the people are to the priests. Prayer is the one service which a saint can always render to a sinner, and the prayer of a saintly layman is more likely to prevail with God than that of a bad priest.

2. *Absolution.*

Pardon is a sovereign act, which God at His own pleasure performs to the guilty. He exercised that prerogative in ancient times; and when those who offended confessed their faults to Him, He freely forgave them (Ps. xxxii. 5). But an earthly sovereign in some instances delegates his prerogative, and a minister of State sometimes reprieves or pardons a criminal in his master's name. The question therefore arises, cannot God the great sovereign in a similar way delegate His prerogative of mercy to man? Cannot He empower one or more of His servants to pardon sinners in His name?

There is, as we think, no doubt of the power. The only thing we doubt about is, whether He has or has not given to any man or to any class of men authority to dispense to others pardon for sins committed against Himself? It is entirely a question of evidence. Is there any evidence in the Scriptures to show that God has delegated to priests or to ministers authority to forgive to men the sins which they have committed against God? The answer to this question involves necessarily the examination of such passages as are usually quoted in support of sacerdotal absolution.

The text most frequently cited in this connection is the word of Christ to the apostles after His resurrection, "Whosesoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them: whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." On this we remark:—

1. Whatever the power implied in these words, it was conferred, so far as can be gathered from the text, upon apostles only. But we have no right to suppose that every privilege bestowed on apostles was bestowed upon the ordinary ministers by whom they were succeeded. The apostles were witnesses chosen afore of God for a special purpose, and richly endowed with supernatural gifts. All admit that as a

matter of fact they did possess the gift of tongues, the gift of miracles, the gift of inspiration, and the power of bestowing the Holy Ghost on any person on whom they laid their hands. It need not therefore be regarded as very wonderful, if it had pleased God to bestow upon the apostles the power of forgiving sins.

2. The main difficulty of the case is to find proof that the apostles ever handed over to others the same power of pardon, which this exposition of the text supposes that Christ bestowed upon them. There is no record of such transmission, nor of any of their companions in that age, nor of their disciples for some ages after, claiming to possess a similar prerogative. It is known as an undeniable fact, that the supernatural gift of tongues has not come down to the present generation of Christian ministers; neither has the gift of miracles; neither has the gift of inspiration. None of these has been transmitted; all appear to have died out in one or two generations. Why then should the divine prerogative of pardoning sin be transmitted, or why are we asked to believe without evidence from Scripture that it was so continued? It is in regard to the transmission that the proof fails. Supposing that, by the words in question, the power of absolution was granted to the apostles, there is no evidence whatever that it went farther, or that they handed it over to those who followed them.

3. It seems to be stranger still, that the New Testament does not lead us to believe that the apostles themselves ever used the prerogative of sitting in the confessional and forgiving sins committed by men against God. Yet these men were filled with love to Christ and desire to do good to human souls. If they could have pardoned sin, we must believe they would have done it, and taught men to come to them personally to obtain the blessing. But it is not on record, that any man or woman ever came to an apostle to obtain absolution for sins after baptism; or that any sinner was directed to apply to an apostle for pardon, or reproved for neglecting to apply. No writer has ever yet produced from the New Testament the case of any sinner coming to confess his personal sins to an apostle in private, and who in consequence of so doing obtained remission. This historical

fact leads us to suspect, that whatever the Lord Jesus meant in using the mysterious words of John xx. 23, He did not mean to confer upon the apostles the ordinary power of absolution. They did not understand Him to do so; if so, they would have used their powers.

4. It is no less strange that if the apostles were invested with the prerogative of pardoning sin, they invariably teach men to look for the blessing, not to them, but to Christ and to God. The sorcerer Simon offers money to buy the power of conferring the Holy Ghost at his pleasure; but Peter rebukes him for his sin, and teaches him to whom he is to look for pardon: "Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee." If a man fall into sin, the Apostle John teaches him that the remedy is not to be found either in priest or in apostle, but in Jesus: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" and in the previous chapter he states the same fact: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." In the doxology the glory of pardon is given directly to Christ, not to man in any position: "Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by His blood," Rev. i. 5.

We have thus seen that there is no evidence that the apostles ever assumed, or exercised, the power of forgiving the sins that men committed against God; there is no evidence that, if they possessed the power, they ever transmitted it to those who followed them; while there is evidence that they directed sinners to look for pardon directly to God through Christ. We are entitled to infer that no priest or other man possesses the power of pardoning sin in virtue of receiving it from the apostles; that the apostles did not possess it themselves; and consequently did not understand the words of John xx. 23 in the sense of conferring upon them this power.

5. We have therefore to face the further question, What is the meaning of saying to them, "Whosesoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven; whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained"? We may feel assured that it was not inserted in the divine word without a meaning and a purpose.

What is this meaning? We explain it on the principle that the practice of inspired men is the best comment upon the law under which they acted. The power conferred by the words is best explained by the apostolic history. What power in regard to sin did the apostles, according to that history, ever exercise?

(1.) In preaching they assured men that if they believe the gospel their sins are pardoned, and that if they reject it they are condemned. Peter did this at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins;" and also to Cornelius down at Cæsarea: "Through His name every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins." Paul preached the same message in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia: "Through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins, and by Him every one that believeth is justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." John also said: "The blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

(2.) In governing the Christian society, the apostles excluded those guilty of gross and notorious sin from Church fellowship, and, in case they repented, restored them to fellowship again. In the former instance they "retained" the sin, that is, regarded the sinner as bound over to the penalties of it: in the latter they "remitted" the sin, that is, delivered the penitent from the ecclesiastical penalty. An illustration of both is presented in the case of the incestuous man. When his fall became notorious, and brought scandal on the Church at Corinth, Paul wrote to them: "Put away the wicked man from among yourselves." Then when he repented the apostle wrote: "Sufficient to such an one is this punishment which was inflicted by the many, so that contrariwise ye should forgive him and comfort him." He "retained" the sin of Hymeneus and Philetus when he delivered them unto Satan, that they may be taught not to blaspheme (1 Tim. i. 20); he made arrangements for the remission of punishment to penitents when he said: "If a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in a spirit of meekness" (Gal. vi. 1).

The New Testament does not show that an apostle exer-

cised any other power in regard to remission of sin than these two things. It follows that John xx. 23 must refer to one of them, if not to both. We incline to think that the power spoken of is that used in governing the Christian society rather than in preaching the gospel. It is the power of forgiving and of retaining sin that is conferred by the words of John xx. 23, rather than the power of declaring the terms on which this forgiving and retaining may be performed. The forgiveness spoken of is that which the Church grants the penitent for an offence committed against herself. This the Church, as the injured party, has a right to bestow; and the apostle, or, in his absence, the Church rulers, as the organs and representatives of the Church, have full authority to pronounce. The privilege of the apostles is, that they were the first to exercise this act of government in the Christian Church, and therein to set an example which was to be followed in after times. Such absolution as this still exists in every scripturally governed Church. But to no apostle and to no man has it ever been granted to pardon offences committed against God. It is presumption and profanity for any man who knows the Scriptures to claim such power.

Another text often quoted in the same connection is Matt. xvi. 19, the words which the Lord addressed to Peter: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The same privilege is not limited to Peter, but is conveyed to all the disciples in Matt. xviii. 18. On this we remark:—

1. The expression "bind" and "loose," on which the argument turns, is used somewhat vaguely in this passage. We are not told what is bound or what is loosed, so that it is not evident at first sight what is the nature of the power conferred, or on what objects it is exercised. The only thing clear on the face of the text itself is, that if exercised by the apostles the thing done is ratified in heaven.

2. The use of the term "whatsoever" excludes the idea of persons being "bound" or "loosed;" and this would seem to exclude the meaning of excommunicating or absolving, which is always applied to persons. Roman theologians assume

that the thing bound or loosed is sins. To bind sins on men, or to loose men from sins, they regard as virtually synonymous with the retaining and remitting of John xx. 23. But this is mere assumption. There is nothing but fancy to connect the one with the other. The two words were not spoken at the same time, nor do they touch apparently on the one subject. The one was spoken before the resurrection, the other after that event. Sins may be remitted or retained, but we cannot well speak of binding or loosing sins.

3. Two facts, however, connect the text with ecclesiastical offences. The first occurrence of the phrase connects it with the gift of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. The use of keys is to open and to close; and by a change of figure, binding and loosing may be expressive of excluding and admitting to Church membership. The other occurrence of the phrase in Matt. xviii. 18, is by the context connected with the case of the brother who has been wronged by a brother, and who in the last resort brings it before the Church. This is a case of discipline; and as the passage about binding and loosing follows immediately, it is not impossible that it has something to do with the expulsion and readmission of offending members.

4. But in this application the sense of the expression must be limited. It contemplates the case of heinous sins which bring scandal on the congregation, and are therefore proper subjects of discipline. These expose the guilty to expulsion, and the apostles as Church rulers pronounce the sentence which imposes or frees from the penalty attaching to them. The sentence which excludes the offender and restores the penitent is ratified in the court above, and obtains the approval of God. We cannot see that the text contains anything more than this. But this is something entirely different from the case of a Church member, who by the keys is already within the Church, and is not excluded from it, going once a year to confess his sins in private to a priest, and obtaining from him absolution for offences against God. We deny the authority of an apostle, or of any man, to forgive sins in such a case. A Church ruler, acting on behalf of the Church, may have divine authority to absolve from a penalty that the Church has imposed for an offence

against herself, without having any right to judge and pronounce absolution for offences committed against God.

5. Supposing, therefore, that it refers to exclusion from the kingdom of God, and readmission into it, it is simply parallel with John xx. 23, the meaning of which has been already explained. The former states figuratively what the latter expresses literally.

6. The power of exclusion and readmission is granted to the apostles of Christ. We could not infer from either passage that it ever extended beyond them. But the apostles have died out, and the Church cannot continue to exist except the power which they possessed in regard to the admission and exclusion of members is lodged in somebody. That power is necessary to the Church's continued existence. But we find that, in addition to the apostles, others exercised a similar power with apostolic approval. The Church of Corinth, by Paul's directions, first excluded and then restored the incestuous man. Titus is to reject the heretic after a second admonition. The Church of Thyatira is blamed for retaining the woman Jezebel, who taught the people of God to commit fornication. It is obvious from these examples that the power of imposing, and of course of freeing from Church censures, was exercised by other than apostles in their lifetime. We infer that it was transmitted by the apostles, and continues to be a permanent power in the Church. But this is quite a different thing from the authority claimed by the priesthood, to forgive violations of the law of God to persons who are not excluded from Church fellowship.

7. But whether even this is the true meaning of the passage is open to doubt, and has often been denied. Certainly it seems possible that it refers to legislation, and that it granted authority to the apostles to prescribe rules binding upon the kingdom of God, and to release from rules which previously were regarded as law. The apostles are the lawgivers of the Church of Christ. Whatever they bind upon men binds to all time; whatever they take from the human shoulders in the way of burden, oppresses no more. The assembly of apostles and elders loosed the Gentile Christians from the yoke of the ceremonial law, and bound

them to abstain from meat offered to idols, from things strangled, from fornication, and from blood. They bind upon the Church such ordinances as the church-meeting and the Lord's Day; they loose from the obligation of circumcision and the Passover. To bind and to loose in this sense is the privilege of inspired men; but there is no evidence that the same power to bind or free the conscience belongs to any man not gifted with inspiration. If we take the passage in this sense, it still falls short—very far short of the doctrine of sacerdotal absolution. It conveys an idea entirely distinct from that in John xx. 23, and helps to remove the difficulty of supposing that two texts differing so much both in sound and expression refer to the same thing; while it is no less in harmony than the other with the context where it occurs. It simply implies that the apostles as inspired men have divine authority to direct the conditions on which the keys of the kingdom are to be used, and that their action in this respect on earth is ratified by God.

It is clear from these considerations that the confession and absolution set up in the Roman Church find no sanction in the New Testament. Romish confession is made to a priest, not to the person or society that the individual sinner has offended. It is made in private under the seal of secrecy, and therefore cannot be regarded as an acknowledgment to the Church. It is made periodically; and therefore not necessarily the expression of sorrow for any notorious sin. It is expected from every adult member; and therefore not from those exclusively who have committed special crimes. It makes confession necessary to retain communion, rather than the only means open to a sinner of recovering communion after it has been lost. It is entirely different in its nature from scriptural confession and absolution.

Every departure from Scripture precedent is injurious, more or less according to circumstances. This is specially true of the Romish substitute of the confessional and of sacerdotal absolution.

The practice does no good to the sinner. No doubt people think they feel a kind of relief when they confess guilt and pour their tale of sin into the ear of another. There is truth in this to some extent; but relief is not pardon, and telling

the story of human sin and folly is a very different thing from the removal of guilt, which can be obtained only by faith and repentance. It deceives the sinner, to lead him to believe that man can pardon offences against God. Thinking that he has received it from the priest, he often sees no necessity of looking for it elsewhere. He thus contents himself with the shadow and loses the substance.

It does harm to the priest. It pollutes the mind of the confessor, making it a moral cesspool into which the filth of the parish flows. The purest imagination is not above the danger of taint. Evil communications corrupt good manners. The very work of the confessor is to become the receptacle of such communications, and the position compels him to carry with him, go where he may, an imagination corrupted with evil thoughts which cannot fail to have a debasing influence on himself.

The practice of auricular confession adds immensely to the undue influence of the priesthood, and in a corresponding degree degrades the people into a state of servility. It puts the clergyman in possession of the sins and follies of the whole congregation. It makes him acquainted with the secrets of every home. This it is not necessary for him to know, if his only object is to warn them of the danger of sin and to point them out the remedy. For every sin, and for every degree of sin, there is but one remedy — the blood of Jesus; and this remedy can be prescribed without the minister knowing more than the fact that sin is present; and this fact he knows from the Scriptures in every individual case without any confession whatever. What the existing practice really effects, is to prostrate the laity at the feet of the clergy. Men know this, and as a rule keep away from the confessional; but women, being more ready to believe, and to suppose that the absolution of the priest actually conveys the pardon of God, usually fall into the trap. As a class, they are the most devout and priest-ridden. If a woman has ever made one false step from the path of virtue, the moment she makes it known to the priest she voluntarily puts herself in his power, and must do his bidding; for she knows that her secret is in his keeping, and that a word from him can blast her life. So long as the priest is the depositary

of the secrets of the parish, men and women alike feel that the path of wisdom is not to rebel or even to offend. In a word, the confessional is at once the secret of sacerdotal power and of popular submission.[1]

3. *Satisfaction.*

The Protestant doctrine is that the Lord Jesus by His death upon the cross has made so thorough and complete satisfaction for sin to the justice of God, that there remains nothing for the sinner to do in the way of making satisfaction for himself. Christ has provided salvation by the merit of His life and of His death; what grace enables man to do is simply to accept the salvation which Christ has provided, and to live under a constant sense of the great obligation which His love hath imposed upon him.

Roman theologians "use the word *satisfaction* to signify that compensation by which a man makes some reparation to God for the sins he has committed:" they explain satisfaction to mean "the full payment of what is enough, for what is enough seems to lack nothing."[2] Speaking of penance, the Council of Trent distinctly states, that "No Catholic ever thought that by this kind of satisfactions on our part, the virtue of the merit and of the satisfaction of our Lord Jesus is either obscured or to any extent lessened."[3] Still, if it be the fact that Christ made satisfaction, that is, made "full payment of what is enough," it is difficult to see that man needs to do more: if a man requires to make reparation to God for his sins, it is difficult to understand that the payment of Christ was enough; and if it was not enough, then its virtue is either obscured or to some extent diminished. The Romish doctrine therefore involves us in this dilemma, that we must either deny the necessity of penance, or the sufficiency of Christ's satisfaction. The admission of any one of them is the denial of the other.

[1] Let me refer for a fuller discussion of this subject to an article, entitled "Confession and Absolution," written by me, which appeared in the *London Quarterly Review* for January 1874.

[2] *Trent Catechism*, ii. 5. 59.

[3] Council of Trent, Session xiv. chap. 8.

The doctrine of penance, that is, that men, notwithstanding the fact that Christ has died, are still under obligation to make some compensation to God for the sins which they have committed, finds no place in the Holy Scriptures. Men are to repent of their sins, and it is only natural that true repentance when felt should show itself by suitable signs; but neither the signs of penitence, nor sackcloth and ashes, nor alms-deeds, nor restitution, nor sufferings, are ever represented in the word of God as making any reparation to the divine Father for the transgression of His law. Sufferings voluntarily undertaken or imposed upon us by our fellow-man, cannot in their very nature compensate God, or do Him any good. They are not necessary, for Christ has "done enough;" and for man to undergo them at his own desire may subject him at a future day to this question, "Who required this at your hand?" The temporal calamities which the people of God encounter in this world mark His displeasure against sin, and constitute the chastisement by which the heavenly Father trains His children for the enjoyment of the higher life; but there is no passage in Holy Scripture which represents the patient endurance of these temporal scourges as enabling Christians to make satisfaction for sin to God. That is no more than the false interpretation which men in their ignorance put upon the sufferings of time. To think that pains endured by men in this world can save them from pains awaiting them in the next, is doubtless the prompting of the natural heart, but it is not the teaching of the word or Spirit of God.

It does indeed seem to be the will of God, that although sinners who repent and believe the gospel obtain from God the instant remission of their guilt, they are not free from the consequences of their sin in other respects until the sanctified soul, released at death, enters into glory, and the body, delivered from the grave, puts on immortality at the resurrection of the just. But these temporal effects do not atone for sin, or make to God any compensation for it. They teach us what a vile thing sin is, and how odious it appears in the sight of the Holy. These sufferings try our faith and prove a wholesome medicine to the soul, divine grace using them to humble us and to refine us like the pure gold. It is through

such tribulation that we enter into the kingdom. God has a moral purpose in subjecting us to it, and affliction accompanied by grace is for our good. But no such trial constitutes man's propitiation with God. Christ is the one and all-sufficient propitiation. There is suffering enough in the world that cannot be avoided; there is no need to add to the burden by imposing penalties upon others, or undertaking them ourselves, without necessity. It is quite possible to multiply the sorrows of the present, without reducing to any appreciable extent the sorrows of the hereafter.

The penances usually prescribed in the confessional—fasting, prayer, alms-deeds — are not such as to make any compensation to God for sin. How can divine anger be propitiated by a man who, under the advice of a father confessor, repeats so many Ave Marias or Pater Nosters, or chants so many psalms, or who eats fish instead of flesh meat, or goes round a holy well so many times on bended knees? What must be the nature of a Deity who could be satisfied with such things? Apart from His own declaration, how can any one know that such things please Him? And where is it written that such "voluntary humility" is required at the sinner's hands? No doubt humility, not pride—self-denial, not gratification of the flesh—mortification of the members, not indulgence in the pleasures of sin, are graces and duties enjoined upon true Christians; but it is not necessary to do more than manifest these qualities as the opportunities of everyday life present themselves; but when they are manifested, then to set them down to our credit as meritorious acts is mere self-deception; they are only illustrations of the workings of divine grace in human nature, but not compensations for sin.

It seems to be the divine will that the temporal results of sin will remain, and must, to some extent at least, be encountered, let man do as he may. The detected criminal must go to prison, though the tear of sorrow falls. The spendthrift must face poverty and ruin, let him do penance as he may. The drunkard and his house have to endure wretchedness, though he perform the heaviest task that his confessor pleases to prescribe. If penance does not lighten our burden in the world that now is, how can a man cherish the confidence that it will do so in the world to come?

CHAPTER III.—PRELACY.

THE Church of Rome presents the most conspicuous example of the prelatic form of government; but the same system is also found to exist, though in a less developed form, in the Greek and Anglican Churches. Members of the Reformed Church, accustomed to study and admire little more than the grand doctrinal truths of revelation, feel it hard to understand the vast importance attached to the outward form of the Church by divines who may be taken to represent these three great ecclesiastical bodies. Thus the Council of Trent, speaking for the Roman Church, invokes a very heavy curse on any one who says that the hierarchy is not a divine institution, or that a bishop is not superior to a presbyter, or that those ordained by any but bishops are lawful ministers of the word:—

"If any one shall say that in the Catholic Church there is not a hierarchy instituted by divine ordination, consisting of bishops, presbyters, and ministers: let him be anathema.

"If any one shall say that bishops are not superior to presbyters, or that they have not the power of confirming and ordaining, or that that power which they possess is common to them with the presbyters, or that orders conferred by them, without the consent or vocation of the people, or of the secular power, are invalid; or that those who have neither been rightly ordained nor sent by ecclesiastical and canonical power, but come from elsewhere, are lawful ministers of the word and of the sacraments: let him be anathema."[1]

The Anglican Church contents itself with the lesser excommunication pronounced upon those who shall declare that its form of government is repugnant to the word of God;[2] and

[1] Session xxiii. *Canons* 6 and 7.

[2] Thus in the *Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical* of 1603, it is said in Canon 7: "Whosoever shall hereafter affirm that the government of the Church

bishops and individual theologians of that Church represent that no ordinance can be duly administered—no baptism, no marriage, no rite can be legitimately performed—without the orders and offices of Episcopacy.[1] Speaking of ordination performed in Presbyterian Churches, one of the ablest Anglican writers does not scruple to use these emphatic words:—

"The Catholic Church in all ages has rejected such ordinations, and counted them wholly null; therefore the Presbyterian Establishment, being founded in schism, and destitute of an apostolical ministry, constitutes no part of the visible Church of Christ."[2]

These and other passages of a similar kind which might be cited, show the vast importance which Romish and Anglican divines attach to the prelatic form of Church polity, and render it almost hopeless to reason with persons pledged to views so extreme, or to enter with them on any reconsideration of the question. Dr. Charles Wordsworth, Bishop of St. Andrews, however, invites us to make the experiment; for he says:—

"It is in my opinion of the utmost importance to the interests of us all, to our moral, social, political, and religious interests, and, I will add, to the interests of the gospel throughout the world, that the differences between Episcopacy and Presbyterianism should be reconsidered, with a view to their removal or adjustment."[3]

These calm and moderate words inspire the hope that the bishop who wrote them did not maintain the sentiment embodied in the Anglican canon and in the citations from Taylor and Palmer. He did not, in writing these words, regard Presbyterians as excommunicated outside the Church visible, and not possessing any Christian ordinances whatever. Were

of England, under His Majesty, by archbishops, bishops, deans, archdeacons, and the rest that bear office in the same, is antichristian or repugnant to the word of God, let him be excommunicated *ipso facto*, and so continue until he repent, and publicly revoke such his wicked errors."

[1] Haddan, *Apostolical Succession*, p. 320, cites Bishop Jeremy Taylor as saying: "The sacred orders and offices of Episcopacy, without which no priest, no ordination, no consecration of the sacrament, no absolution, no rite, or sacrament legitimately can be performed in order to eternity."

[2] Palmer, *On the Church*, vol. i. p. 443.

[3] *Outlines of the Christian Ministry.* Introductory Lecture.

it otherwise, in vain we reason or talk of differences; all inquiry is foreclosed if the mind is already made up. We assume, however, that Dr. Wordsworth and those who coincide in his opinion are open to conviction.

The man who, from the outside, calmly surveys the ecclesiastical constitution, which, with some modifications, is common to the three great ecclesiastical corporations of Christendom—Greek, Roman, and Anglican—in the nineteenth century, and compares it with what he reads in the New Testament in regard to the Church of the apostolic age, must be struck with certain peculiarities and contrasts which it presents.

1. He misses the presence of some distinctive features of the primitive time, which, from reading the New Testament, he had supposed were essential to the constitution of the Church. He can no longer find that the officers of the congregation are chosen by its members, or that there are deacons specially appointed to attend to the poor, or that bishop and presbyter are only different names for the same officer, or that there is a plurality of bishops in each local Church, or that the presbyters rule as well as teach the congregation, or that ordinations are performed with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, or that there is a self-purifying power in the Christian society. These things were once facts in the government of the Church; what now strikes the observer is that, in the Greek, Roman, and Anglican Churches, they are facts no more.

2. He marks the presence of a permanent visible head in all prelatic Churches; in the Roman Church this is the first bishop or primate, better known as the pope; while in the Greek or Anglican Church it is the civil ruler or representative of the State. In Episcopal Churches not established by law, this civil headship, it is understood, does not exist.

3. A clerical hierarchy fully developed; that is, a gradation of rank among Church officers carried out to an extraordinary degree, commencing with the deacon who lies at the base of the pyramid, and rising up through priest, rector, canon, archdeacon, dean, bishop, and archbishop. In the Anglican communion it terminates with the archbishop; but in the Roman communion it commences lower down with acolyth and sub-deacon, and reaches higher up to cardinal and pope.

4. In all these three Churches may be observed the ubiquitous presence of the prelate; that is, an ecclesiastical officer who has under his charge an extensive district called a diocese, containing many priests or pastors, and many churches. Between the prelate or bishop, as he is often called, and the priests or presbyters under his care, there is a marked division of duty and labour; to the bishop belongs exclusive power to ordain, to confirm, and to consecrate; to the priesthood in common with the bishop is committed the duty of preaching and administering the sacraments; but priests subordinate to a prelate are divested of all power to ordain or to exercise discipline.

These are the four great distinctive features which strike an outsider in surveying the existing constitution of these Churches; and those who in religion desire as we do to submit everything important to the test of the word of God, would wish to see stated in detail the passages of Scripture on which these prominent principles of the prelatic system rest their authority. But defenders of the system rarely undertake the task which we think necessary in order to remove our doubts and to give us satisfaction. They prefer to select one or two points which they regard most capable of defence, and when they have concentrated on these points the arguments which successive ages have accumulated, they imagine that they have proved their system successfully, and that we ought to be satisfied; whereas all the time they leave untouched other parts of the system which, from our point of view, to say the least, equally stand in need of proof. To accept the whole of a system, and to defend only a part, never can be satisfactory; in every case a writer should say candidly how far he agrees and how far he differs. The facts of the case would then be obvious to himself. Many now think that he is a pillar of the Church who acts only as a buttress to the spire.

Writers who have already made up their minds in favour of a particular system, are at all times easily satisfied with proof. Bishop Wordsworth furnishes a singular instance of this. He tells of a well-known missionary, Dr. Joseph Wolff, who was convinced both of the divine origin of Episcopacy, and that apostolic succession is a scriptural doctrine, because

he found no trace of Presbyterianism among the Eastern Churches.[1] The missionary must have been very easily convinced. Had he been travelling in China or in Tartary, the entire absence of Christianity ought, on the same principle, to have supplied him with adequate proof of the divine origin of Buddhism, and that Confucius is an inspired prophet. That a Christian missionary, with the inspired rule of faith in his hand, should pass it by, in order to discover from the state of things existing in any part of this fallen world sufficient proof of the divine origin of anything, is only less surprising than that a learned prelate should cite such a statement with approval. The inference that Dr. Wolff ought to have drawn is entirely different. The absence of the preserving salt of Presbyterianism has left the Eastern Churches the most corrupt and worthless of all communities that bear the Christian name.

The parts of the prelatic system usually selected by its friends for defence, are the threefold ministry, and that the bishop by divine right is an order superior to the presbyter.

THE THREEFOLD MINISTRY.

This doctrine is officially expressed in the preface to the Anglican Ordinal in these words:—

"That from the apostles' times there have been three orders of ministers in Christ's Church: bishops, priests, and deacons."

This proposition does not assert divine authority for the prelatic system, and does not claim for the threefold ministry more than a century of greater antiquity than we are willing to admit; it is therefore, from our point of view, a very harmless proposition. The only question really worth discussing is not what existed "*from* the apostles' time," but what existed *during* the apostles' time. If Prelacy came into existence within the first twenty-four hours after the last

[1] The passage that Dr. Wordsworth quotes from Wolff is as follows: "The very fact that all the Eastern Churches, without one single exception, have bishops, priests, and deacons; the very fact that a Presbyterian Church is not known,—is to me a *sufficient proof* that *Episcopacy is of divine origin*, and that the doctrine of *apostolic succession is a scriptural doctrine*." *Outlines*, p. 124.

apostle died, it cannot be a divine institution. In that case all is proved that we need to prove in order to show that it is of human origin.

The precise number of orders in the ministry that the apostles appointed is not a point of cardinal importance, and is capable of different answers according to the light in which it is viewed. A great variety of opinion exists on the subject. Some writers maintain that there is only one order, the bishop, all inferior officers being merely delegates appointed by him; others say there are two, the bishop and deacon; others, that there are three, the bishop, priest, and deacon; others, that there are four, two of which are temporary, the apostle and evangelist, and two permanent, the pastor and deacon:[1] while the Council of Trent, speaking for the Roman Church, names no less than seven orders, namely, door-keepers, readers, exorcists, acolyths, sub-deacons, deacons, and priests. In this last enumeration, however, either the *priest* must include the bishop, or else the deacon and sub-deacon must rank as one order, so as to make the seven orders complete.[2]

To writers like Bishop Wordsworth, who think that a threefold ministry is not only a divine institution, but a peculiarity of the prelatic system, it must be gratifying to know that the great majority of Presbyterians hold that doctrine no less than himself. They differ somewhat as to the function and position of each order, but as to the threefold order of the ministry they are quite at one with Dr. Wordsworth. Our first proof of this is the *Second Book of Discipline*,

[1] Dr. Hook (*Church Dictionary*, article "Polity Ecclesiastical") sees many more orders among the clergy than three:—

"The superior orders of the clergy were—1. The bishops. 2. The presbyters. 3. The deacons. . . .

"Among the bishops there was a subordination, they being distinguished into —1. Primate metropolitans. 2. Patriarchs or archbishops. 3. Diocesan bishops. 4. Chorepiscopi or suffragan bishops. . . .

"The inferior *orders* of the clergy were—1. The sub-deacons. 2. The acolyths. 3. The exorcists. 4. The readers. 5. The doorkeepers. 6. The singers. 7. The copiatæ or fossarii. 8. The parabolani. 9. The catechists. 10. The syndics. 11. The stewards."

In this enumeration of "orders" Dr. Hook has forgotten Hooker's convenient distinction between "officers" and "orders." But in face of the enemy all orders vanish except three: bishops, priests, and deacons.

[2] Session xxiii. chap. 2.

drawn up under the eye of Andrew Melville, and adopted by the Church of Scotland in 1578 as her authorized form of government:—

"And according to the parts of this division arises a *threefold* sort of office-bearers in the Church; to wit, of ministers, elders or governors, deacons or distributors. And all these may be called by one general word, ministers of the Church."[1]

Individual theologians of the Reformed Church, great and justly respected, adopt the same principle.

Among these may be named CALVIN: "As we have stated that three classes of ministers are set before us in Scripture, so the early Church distributed all its ministers into three orders. For from the order of presbyters, part were selected as pastors and teachers, while to the remainder was committed the censure of manners and discipline. To the deacons belonged the care of the poor and the dispensing of alms."[2]

DR. JOHN OWEN also says: "It is certain that the order very early observed in the Church was one *pastor*, ὁ προέστως, *præses*, quickly called *episcopus* by way of distinction, with many *elders* assisting in rule and teaching, and *deacons* ministering in things of this life, whereby the order of the Church was preserved and its authority represented."[3]

NEANDER, the German Church historian, also affirms "a threefold ministry in the apostolic Church, namely, apostles, evangelists, and the teachers appointed for separate Churches."[4]

DR. CHARLES HODGE, the eminent American theologian, adds his testimony: "There are then three permanent officers in the Church, bishops, elders, and deacons; and of these the bishop is pronounced the first in dignity and usefulness."[5]

If there ever have arisen in the Reformed Church any theologians more distinguished than the four now named, we confess that we do not know them. Their united testimony will suffice to show that the doctrine of a threefold ministry is not peculiar to the prelatic system. The fact is that those who believe that the ruling elder holds by divine right an

[1] *Second Book of Discipline*, chap. ii. 2 and 3.
[2] *Institutes*, iv. 4. 1.
[3] Owen's *Gospel Church*, chap. vi. p. 127.
[4] *History of the Planting*, vol. i. p. 148.
[5] *Church Polity*, p. 274.

office distinct from that of the pastor, as nearly all the Presbyterian formularies assert, hold the doctrine of a threefold ministry—pastor, elder, and deacon. Even those who hold that there were originally only two orders, bishop and elder being only different names for the same officer, will admit that one of the presbyters, in virtue of the "double honour" due to diligence in ruling and teaching, even before the close of the first century presided at public worship, and in meetings of his fellow-elders *primus inter pares:* and that towards the end of the second century, owing to his constant presidency in the presbytery, he came to be regarded as occupying a separate and higher office. No Presbyterian, therefore, whatever his views of the elder's office, provided only that a little explanation is admitted, need have any great quarrel with the statement of the threefold ministry as given in the English Ordinal. The two instituted by the apostles, soon after the apostles' time were divided into three.[1]

SUPERIORITY OF THE BISHOP TO THE PRESBYTER.

The doctrine entertained by Anglicans on this subject seems very innocent, as stated by one of its most learned and able advocates :—

"Episcopacy, or the superiority of one pastor in each Church vested with peculiar powers, is of apostolic institution; and all Churches are bound to adhere to this rule." [2]

This as it stands is a very modest proposition. It is simply the expression of a fact embodied in the constitution of every Presbyterian congregation at the present hour. Every such congregation has a pastor superior to the elders in his charge, and vested with peculiar powers, such as public instruction, administration of sacraments, and performing of marriage. It is the congregational Episcopacy, or, as we call it, the Presbyterianism of the close of the second century, which Mr. Palmer undertakes to maintain; the thing, however, which he

[1] This is Dean Stanley's view of the matter :—

"We commonly speak of *three* orders, and the present elevation of bishops has fully justified that phrase; but according to the strict rules of the Church derived from those early times, *there are but two*—presbyters and deacons." *Christian Institutions*, p. 238.

[2] Palmer's *Treatise on the Church*, vol. i. p. 282.

wishes to support is not such a poor stunted institution as that, but the full-blown diocesan Episcopacy of after times. Granted that he proves all he undertakes to prove; the foundation is much too narrow to bear the superstructure that all true bishops are diocesan, that they are successors of the apostles; that they exercise the authority which the apostles exercised; that by divine right they are spiritual princes, and that their dioceses are principalities. The conclusion, all will admit, is somewhat greater than the fact proved. The fact proved, or that he professes to prove, is that the pastor is superior to the presbyters and deacons of his own Church; the conclusion which others draw from the fact, is that the district in which he rules is a principality, and that he himself is a spiritual prince.[1]

A complete and solid defence of the prelatic position should, according to our view of the matter, discuss such questions as the following:—

1. Was the Church of the apostolic age a single congregation, or was it a diocese comprehending many congregations and many pastors?

2. Did the apostles leave the government and instruction of this Church in the hands of one officer or of several—of a bishop or of a presbytery?

3. If they committed its care to a single individual, was he higher in rank than an ordinary pastor; and had he, as compared with the presbyters, exclusive power to ordain, to confirm, and to consecrate?

4. Did the apostles appoint in any Church presbyters with a right to instruct the people and administer the ordinances, but with no right to ordain or exercise discipline?

5. Is he a complete presbyter in the New Testament sense who has no right to ordain or to exercise jurisdiction?

[1] The *Tracts for the Times* cites the following from approved English divines:—

"Can you, sir, when you consider that bishops are appointed to succeed the apostles, and like them to stand in Christ's place, and exercise their kingly, priestly, and prophetical office over their flocks,—can you, when you consider this, think it novel or improper, or uncouth, to call them *spiritual princes*, and their dioceses *principalities?* When *they have everything in their office which can denominate a prince.*" The Tractarians quote this from Hick's *Treatise on the Episcopal Order*, § 2.

6. Was any Church in the apostolic age left permanently without bishops, or in which there was no bishop but one?

7. In the New Testament is the right of ordination ever assigned to a diocesan bishop, or is there a single instance of a diocesan bishop exercising that right?

We do not claim the right to dictate to those who believe in the prelatic system the line of proof which they must follow in its defence; that is a matter entirely for themselves. We are only stating the points about which we entertain doubts, and on which we desire satisfaction. These points are not settled, indeed they are scarcely touched by the proposition of Palmer—"the superiority of one pastor in each Church vested with peculiar powers." Nor are our doubts set at rest by showing that Episcopacy in some form existed in the apostolic age. Nobody doubts that. Episcopacy means inspection or oversight. No congregation can prosper without its members being subject to spiritual oversight. The question is, Is that oversight congregational or diocesan? Is the New Testament bishop a pastor, that is, the presiding elder of a single Church, or is he a prelate—an officer of superior rank to a pastor, having, it may be, many ministers and many Churches to govern as a permanent charge?

All through this great controversy, the prelate stands in the thickest of the fight. About and around him, the battle has raged furiously for nearly four hundred years. What occurred *after* the first century is, in our estimation, a small matter; it cannot affect our faith or our obligations in the slightest degree. For those who find the only rule of spiritual guidance in the word of God, the one question, and the only one, is—Is the prelate planted in the Church by the apostles, and have we evidence to believe that his right to govern pastors and Churches is divine? If satisfied that his office and functions are divine, it is our duty as Christians to submit to him. But if not satisfied from Scripture that his origin is divine, then it is our duty to repudiate his claims, and to regard his office as a mere human growth of the post-apostolic ages.

Let us strive to form a clear idea of the functionary whose existence in the apostolic age has to be proved from the Holy Scriptures. On this point precision is required, for an ambiguity attaches to the name of bishop, the word being

used in one sense in the New Testament, and used in another in after times. The scriptural bishop is one of the spiritual overseers of a single congregation who with his colleagues or fellow-bishops is occupied in instructing and ruling the people of whom that congregation consists. But the modern bishop of whose existence we now inquire, is the spiritual overseer of a whole diocese having usually in his charge many pastors, many congregations, and much people. His most appropriate designation is a prelate—a term which never was applied to presbyters or scriptural bishops, and is therefore not attended with any ambiguity.

The prelate occupies a place entirely his own. He is not an apostle, for he has not received the personal call and commission of Christ, and cannot show the signs; he is not a prophet, for want of inspiration; nor is he an evangelist, for he does not move about from place to place preaching to the unconverted. On the other side, he is not an elder or scriptural bishop, because he is not in charge of a single congregation; nor is he a deacon, attending to the temporal wants of the poor and distressed. The spiritual oversight of a large district, often with an overflowing population, teeming with churches and clergy, called a diocese, utterly beyond his power personally to manage, is committed to his care. From the very necessities of the case, however laborious he may be, he is obliged to preach, administer the sacraments, and to do almost everything through the agency of others. He is the ecclesiastical superior of all these pastors, the chief shepherd of all these flocks, the high priest who by deputy officiates at all these altars. The only work not committed to his deputies, but reserved entirely for himself, is ordination, perhaps we may add confirmation and consecration. We accept implicitly the statement of one of the most learned advocates of the system, who defines the prelate to be—"The single president of a diocese who came in the room of the apostles, having presbyters, deacons, and laity under him, and possessing exclusive powers of ordination, and primarily of confirmation, with primary authority in the administration of sacraments and of discipline."[1] The reader would do well to remember

[1] Mr. Haddan's article "Bishop" in Smith and Cheetham's *Christian Antiquities.*

this definition of the modern bishop; it is possible we may often have occasion to refer to it. Hooker describes him as a "Minister of God unto whom, with permanent continuance, there is given, not only power of administering the word and sacraments, which power other presbyters have, but also a further power to ordain ecclesiastical persons, and a power of chiefty in government over presbyters as well as laymen, a power to be, by way of jurisdiction, a pastor even to pastors themselves." [1] The distinctive characteristics of the modern bishop are, according to Hooker, ordination and jurisdiction over pastors and laymen; but, according to Haddan, they are ordination and confirmation. The Roman Catholic account of this high dignitary is a little more explicit than that given by either of the Anglican writers:—

"The bishop is empowered to confirm the faithful, to ordain priests, to raise priests to the episcopal order, to consecrate the holy oils which are used in giving baptism, confirmation, holy orders, and extreme unction, in consecrating churches and the sacred vessels intended for the service of the sanctuary, and finally in anointing kings and emperors." [2]

This is the great ecclesiastic for whose existence and functions in the first century divine authority has to be produced. We desire to see the clause in the inspired charter which warrants his original appointment. That can be produced in case of the deacon. We can prove the existence under apostolic sanction of the presbyter or elder; for Bishop Lightfoot has conclusively shown that the presbyter and apostolic bishop were the same.[3] But we ask to have the same or equal authority for the modern bishop or prelate, who exercises jurisdiction over pastors, and who has exclusive right to ordain and primary authority to confirm. From those

[1] *Ecc. Polity*, B. vii. 2. For sake of comparison I append a definition of the modern bishop given by an old Presbyterian writer:—

"A grand and pompous sinecure, a domination over all the Churches and ministers in a large district managed by others as his delegates, but requiring little labour of a man's own; and all this supported by large revenues and attended with considerable secular honours." Boyse's *Office of a Scriptural Bishop*. The writer's idea of a modern bishop was evidently derived from something he had seen.

[2] Sermon by an Irish Roman Catholic bishop at the consecration of one of his colleagues.

[3] *Comment. on Philippians*, p. 94.

who believe in the divine authority of this great official, we ask the production in the New Testament of one man in whom these functions met and by whom they were exercised? That demand can be met easily in regard to every century from the present down to the third; but if the prelate and diocesan Episcopacy are divine institutions, the demand can be met in the first century with as much ease as in any of the after ages. Before we can be expected to receive the prelate as a Church officer ruling under divine sanction, we do not think it unreasonable to ask to have set before us one man named in the New Testament who without doubt filled the office in question, inferior to apostles and prophets, but superior to elders and deacons; whose sphere of labour was a diocese, whose diocese contained Churches and pastors, who exercised jurisdiction over these pastors and Churches, and who within his diocese had the right to confirm and ordain. We have a right to ask by what special name this officer was distinguished from apostles, prophets, and evangelists on the one side, and from congregational officers, such as bishops, elders, pastors, and deacons on the other? If such an officer has no distinctive name assigned him, have we any evidence of his existence at all? If any Church officer could be found in the New Testament coming nearly up to Mr. Haddan's definition of the prelate, it would do much to remove our doubts as to his existence. But, as has been said, we have no right to suggest to others the line of proof which they are bound to pursue. They choose their own course and produce their own arguments. Our business at present is to weigh these arguments, and to consider how far they are fitted to carry in them conviction to the mind.

ARGUMENTS À PRIORI.

Reasoning founded on our own notions of the fitness of things, antecedent to an examination of what divine revelation has to say on the subject, is not entitled to much weight. It can be used with equal efficacy on any side. We have seen *à priori* arguments for prelacy, and equally strong for independency, and we could with ease produce similar arguments for Presbyterianism; but proof of this nature does

not strengthen a case. To argue, as is done by Bishop Wordsworth,[1] that in the Church there are bishops divinely authorized to govern presbyters and Churches, because the corporate idea of Church organization in Scripture is unity, or because there is order in the external world, or because there are three persons in the Godhead, or because monarchy is the best form of civil government, or because the ends of government lead us to expect in the Church such a gradation of rank as is to be found in the army, or the navy, or the civil service, is a species of logic which carries in it no conviction to any intelligent mind, deriving its religious beliefs from the Bible. It is either founded on an assumption that is not admitted and requires proof, or upon some dim and shadowy analogy, or on something that has no connection with the subject however remote, and which to compare with it is itself a species of irreverence. The Pope is as conspicuous an example of unity, and order, and gradation of rank as a common prelate—some, indeed, would think more so; but the reasoning in question would conclude for him and the whole system which he represents much more convincingly than it would prove Episcopacy.

But the whole reasoning is vicious from the very beginning. On matters of pure revelation, the written word of God is our only guide. By its testimony, it is to be hoped that all sides are willing to abide. Prelacy is either a divine institution or a human growth; to spin out a long series of arguments, antecedent to what the one and only authority has to say on the subject, is the most useless task that theologian ever undertook. To reason upon a matter in regard to which the Bible is the only guide, and all the while not to consult the Bible, is mere waste of time. The rational course is to open the Bible, and reverently to read what it says. If the divine word, fairly interpreted, declares for the prelatic system, that with us is decisive, nothing further need be said—we require no *à priori* argument whatever.

ANALOGY OF THE JEWISH CHURCH.

An argument from analogy, though it may help to confirm

[1] *Outlines*, pp. 10–20.

what has been already established on sufficient evidence, is not of itself sufficient to prove the truth of any proposition. The proper use of analogy, as Bishop Butler has shown by a conspicuous illustration, is to answer objections. If, for example, a man were to avow the opinion that three orders in the ministry are subversive of all government and could never receive divine sanction, his objection might be answered effectively by appealing to the analogy of the Jewish Church, and showing that God Himself set up a system in which we actually find three orders, and no more,—high priest, priest, and Levite. Nobody, however, maintains an opinion so preposterous. The question which we have to consider is, whether God has instituted in the Christian Church a permanent class of officers higher than ordinary pastors, and has charged them with certain powers and functions which pastors and teachers have no right to exercise? This question is not to be answered by analogy. It can be answered only by showing, not what Moses did under very different circumstances during the Old Dispensation, but what the apostles did under the New. It is quite conceivable, as the two dispensations differ so much in spirit, in essence, in the extent of their application, that a system of government which proved serviceable to the one might not be equally adapted to the other. What Christ and His apostles sanctioned in the government of the Christian Church, is to be known from the New Testament only. Besides, the thing to be proved is not a threefold ministry, which may be either true or false according to the point from which it is viewed, and which is quite reconcilable with either system; it is whether the bishop is superior to the presbyter, that is, the prelate to the pastor, by divine right. Mere analogy on that point establishes nothing. The analogy of three orders in the Jewish Church might be used by one party to justify bishop, priest, and deacon; but a Presbyterian might appeal to the fact in support of pastor, elder, and deacon; while a Romanist with equal reason might use it, if so disposed, in support of another threefold ministry, pope, bishop, and priest. This is only beating the air. All admit there was a difference of orders in both dispensations; and as there were three in the old, many admit there are three in the Christian economy

also. But they do so on what appears to them distinct evidence supplied in the New Testament, not on any fancied analogy whatever. The real question, as it seems to us, is whether the pastors and Churches of a district, so large as to prevent their members meeting for worship statedly at one place, were put by divine authority under the permanent jurisdiction of a Church officer now known as a prelate, and whether this prelate with all his separate functions had either name or existence in New Testament times? That is the point which requires to be proved, and it cannot be proved by analogy. The existence of the prelate in the New Testament age has to be assumed before such an argument would apply; but if his existence is proved without being assumed, the argument from analogy is no longer needed.[1]

THE SEVENTY DISCIPLES.

The argument for the prelatic system, founded on the Mission of the Seventy, mentioned in Luke x., is thus stated by one of its defenders:—

"During our Saviour's life here on earth, He had three orders of ministers in his Church; first, Christ Himself, the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls; then the twelve apostles, and after them the seventy disciples."[2]

If the fact that Christ during His earthly ministry, in addition to the twelve, sent out other seventy also to teach and to preach in their cities, is adduced to prove that there was a gradation of rank among the official servants of Christ, it is not necessary to prove what everybody admits. It could not well be otherwise in a community officered by apostles, prophets, evangelists, bishops, and deacons. It is

[1] Milton deals with the argument in his own vehement style:—

"What think ye, readers? Do ye not understand him? What can be gathered hence, but that the prelate would still sacrifice? Conceive him, readers: he would missificate. Their altars, indeed, were in a fair forwardness; and by such arguments as these they were setting up the molten calf of their mass again, and of their great hierarch the Pope. For if the type of priest be not taken away, then neither of the high priest; it were a strange beheading; and high priest more than one there cannot be, and that one can be no less than a pope." *Reason of Church Government*, chap. v.

[2] Brett's *Divine Right of Episcopacy*, § 7.

clearly proved by 1 Cor. xii. 28 and Eph. iv. 11. But if the argument founded on the fact is intended to prove that a prelate is superior to the pastor or bishop by divine right, it is not entitled to much weight, for various reasons:—

1. The mission of the seventy, like the ministry of the Baptist, occurred at a time when the Church of God was in a transition state, passing from the one dispensation into the other. The Jewish Church, though in a degenerate form, was still standing, and the people of God attending upon the temple worship. The Christian Church was not yet born; it was, so to speak, only coming to the birth. As yet the Lord had not died and risen; and consequently the gospel message founded on these grand truths could not be sent out to the nations. Even the apostles did not receive their commission to the world till after the resurrection. The mother Church of Christianity at Jerusalem had then no separate and visible existence, nor did it receive its organization until the Spirit was poured out at the first Pentecost after the resurrection. No trustworthy inference as to the Church constitution can be drawn from the state of things existing during the transition, while the Church had not as yet received its normal and permanent form.

2. There is in reality no parallel between Christ, the twelve, and the seventy on the one side, and the bishop, priest, and deacon on the other. Christ was not a prelate, and it is not more than reverent to speak of Him in that connection; the apostles were not priests, for they were sent not to serve at the altar, but to preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matt. x. 9); and the seventy were not deacons. The twelve did not appoint the seventy, and exercised over them no jurisdiction. The instructions given to both seem very much alike. Both were sent out on a temporary mission to Jews only. After that the seventy are spoken of no more, while it is only after the resurrection that the apostles are sent on a wider and more permanent mission (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). From an incident so unique we cannot safely infer as to the rank and duties of officials in the new community afterwards organized.

3. There being no identity between the Lord, the twelve, and the seventy on the one side, and the permanent and

ordinary officers of the Christian Church on the other, anything like argument for the divinity of Prelacy must rest on a supposed analogy between what occurred under Christ's personal ministry and what ought to exist after the Christian Church was set up. But this is subject to the exception already taken against every argument founded on analogy. It may answer an objection, but cannot of itself establish truth. Its essential weakness in the present case is shown by the circumstance that it may with equal plausibility be used on the other side. We might say, for example, that Christ while on earth had for His official servants the twelve and the seventy; now that He is in heaven His ministers are pastors and deacons. But though this reasoning is as strong on the one side as on the other, we do not think it would be very convincing.

4. Although Jeremy Taylor speaks of the argument from the twelve and the seventy as "a rock," implying that in his opinion it is the very foundation of the prelatic system, other Episcopalian writers estimate its value more correctly. Bishop Lightfoot in his *Essay on the Christian Ministry* passes it without notice, and Mr. Litton speaks of it in the following terms:—

"Had any distinct testimony referring Episcopacy to Christ's own institution been deducible from Scripture, recourse would never have been had to arguments such as that drawn from the several missions of the twelve and the seventy, in whom it has been said we have the prototypes of the two orders of bishops and presbyters—bishops without a diocese and presbyters without a Church." [1]

5. That the Lord did anything by His action to encourage the prelatic spirit in the Church seems to us inconsistent with the rebuke that He administered to His disciples when that spirit began to appear among them. "There arose also a contention among them, which of them is accounted to be greatest. And He said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles have lordship over them; and they that have authority over them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so; but he that is greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve," Luke xxii. 24–26.

[1] *Church of Christ*, p. 398.

In regard to the passage now quoted there are two things which it cannot be understood to condemn: it does not condemn inequality of rank among Church officers, for that is sanctioned by such texts as 1 Cor. xii. 28 and Eph. iv. 11; nor does it disparage the lawful exercise of that authority attaching to offices which God has appointed in the Church. The very words which Christ spoke on the occasion are followed up by a promise of spiritual authority to them all (Luke xxii. 29, 30); that authority is exercised with divine approval (2 Tim. iv. 2); and Christians are enjoined to submit thereto (Heb. xiii. 17). We cannot understand the words of Christ, therefore, to condemn the exercise of any legitimate authority which He has set up in the Church.

What we do understand Christ to condemn is, first, the eager desire of Christian ministers after worldly greatness and glory; second, the assumption of an unlawful pre-eminence of one minister over his brethren and equals; and third, the exercise even of lawful authority in a haughty and offensive spirit. In this last respect it is parallel to 1 Pet. v. 3, where Peter warns the elders against "lording it over the charge allotted to you." Of course under any ecclesiastical system there may be men imbued with the spirit which the apostle disapproves; for we find here that, long before the first century had run its course, Peter had to put officers of the New Testament Church on their guard against this very thing. But the prelatic system is constructed on worldly principles, and appeals to worldly principles. It is essentially a prize-system, commending itself to men's acceptance on the ground of worldly advantage. Its own friends recommend it on that very ground.[1] More than any other, therefore, it encourages those evil tendencies of human nature which

[1] "Would it really? Think for a minute. You are forgetting that *each of those hundred men has a chance of being selected for the bishopric and its one thousand a year;* and many a man would think £10 a year not at all too high a charge for the assistance of a superintendent, as long as he was a presbyter, and his chance of the bishopric eventually. But look at the thing practically. You will soon have to choose the profession in which you will try to place your sons. Which would you prefer for them, other things being equal—a profession in which they could be sure of £150 a year at once, though they would never be able to rise to anything higher? Or a profession in which they would be at once sure of £140, and *might gain one of twelve prize positions, which would give a thousand a year each?*" Scott's *Talk*, p. 19.

Christ disapproves—personal ambition, hunting after worldly gain, unwarranted assumption of superiority over Christ's ministers, and the lordly exercise even of lawful authority. That many individual prelates are as free from earthly blemish as the ministers of the purest Church in Christendom we cheerfully admit; we only speak of what we regard as the general tendency of the system. Had Christ's ministers in the after ages remembered this faithful admonition of the Lord Jesus, had they crucified ambition, declined the lordship, ignored the "prize position," and declined to set their hearts on being "spiritual princes" and reigning over "principalities," and found their only distinction in making themselves the servants of all, the man of sin would not have developed, and the history of the Christian Church would not have been the melancholy record which it has furnished to succeeding ages.

THE APOSTLESHIP.

The main argument advanced by prelatical writers on behalf of their system is derived from the apostleship. This will appear by the following extracts from some of their ablest divines:—

Dr. Brett:—"The apostolical or highest order, which was appointed to supply the place of Christ Himself after His ascension, was intended by Him not for a temporary but a perpetual institution."[1]

Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, Bishop of Lincoln:—"We do not deny that in the apostolic age the names *Episcopi* and *Presbyteri* were applied to the same persons; but then there were at that time bishops also in our sense of the word, namely, the holy apostles themselves."[2]

Mr. Haddan:—"The episcopate is historically the continuation in its permanent elements of the apostolate."[3]

Bishop Wordsworth of St. Andrews:—"That the apostles formed a distinct body, having prelatical authority each in his own person; that they severally made provision for a successorship to themselves in all the ordinary functions of their

[1] *Divine Right of Episcopacy*, § 9.
[2] *Theophilus Anglicanus*, Part i. chap. x.
[3] Smith and Cheetham, vol. i. p. 212.

prelatical office; and that their successors from the first were, and have been ever since, known by the name of bishops, having presbyters and deacons under them as necessary to complete the clerical ministry."[1]

Professor Archer Butler:—"The great general principle that the apostleship of Jesus Christ is still for ever in the world, as really in all the substance of the office as when it was held under circumstantial differences of miraculous attestation by Peter, and James, and John."[2]

Any man who thoroughly understands the qualifications, functions, and signs of the apostleship, as already drawn from the divine word,[3] is not in much danger of mistaking a prelate for an apostle; nevertheless the above remarks require a fuller refutation.

1. The apostleship is an institution entirely unique; nothing at all like it is to be met with in any other period of Church history. The peculiarities found to meet in an apostle have never all met in any other individual or in any other class of men. The apostle was specially appointed by the Lord; his commission was universal; he had seen the risen Redeemer, and was thus qualified to be a witness of His resurrection; and he had supernatural gifts in a degree more than common —the gift of tongues, the gift of prophecy, the gift of miracles, the gift of inspiration—the Holy Ghost Himself;[4] and, what seems to have been the rarest of all, the power of conferring upon other men this gift of gifts. Such being his gifts, what were his functions? His commission being to the world, he preached the gospel in many countries; he confirmed his mission by the exercise of miraculous powers; he gathered and organized Churches; he appointed Church officers; he exercised a general care over the churches; he was infallible in his oral and written communications of divine truth. He gave evidence of his power by signs, and wonders, and mighty

[1] *Outlines*, Lect. II. p. 127.

[2] Sermon on "Church Principles not inconsistent with Christian Sympathy."

[3] See B. I. chap. i. *ante*.

[4] Evidently this is what Tertullian regarded as the main distinction of an apostle: "For the apostles have the Holy Ghost properly, who have him fully, in the operations of prophecy, and the efficacy of virtues, and the evidences of tongues; *not partially, as all others have.*" *Exhortation to Chastity*, chap. iv.

deeds. The office thus filled by the twelve is an office filled by no man now, and that for the simple reason that no man now alive possesses the same qualifications, or can discharge the same functions, or can give evidence of wielding the same miraculous power. These are the very things on which their apostleship depends. A diocesan bishop may profess, if he chooses, to be an apostle or the successor of apostles, but he cannot say of himself what the true apostle could say,—"Have not I seen Jesus Christ the Lord?"—"an apostle, not from man, neither through men,"—"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience by signs, and wonders, and mighty works." If the gifts of an apostle have not been transmitted down the line, the functions cannot be performed; and if the functions are not performed, in vain we look for the signs. The gifts, the functions, and the signs make up all that is distinctive in the office; and if signs, functions, and gifts are all absent, in what rational sense can it be said that the office is continued? As has been well said by a friend of their own—"If we are to be ruled by those who are miraculously gifted, we must first bring back the miraculous gifts."[1] This is exactly what we say. If we are to be ruled by apostles, we must first bring back the apostolic gifts. This has not yet been done. We conclude, therefore, the apostolate is not continued.

2. The apostolate was a unity. Every one of the twelve was sent by the Lord in person to disciple the nations, to bear witness to His resurrection, to plant and organize Churches, to declare the will of God under inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to exercise a pastoral care over all the Churches, and to give proof of his apostolic authority by miracles and signs. All these and other spiritual duties constitute the work that the apostles were commissioned to perform. But diocesan bishops do not undertake to perform all the functions of the office to which they profess to have succeeded. "Bishops," says one of themselves,[2] "succeed the apostles in their ordinary, not in their extraordinary offices;" "except in their miraculous gifts," says the *Tracts for the Times*.[3] That is, they succeed the apostles in teaching, baptizing, superintending and govern-

[1] Haddan's *Apostolical Succession*, p. 82, *note*.
[2] *Theophilus Anglicanus*, chap. xi. p. 102. [3] No. 74.

ing, but not in being personal witnesses of His resurrection, or in possessing supernatural endowments, or in the exercise of miraculous powers.

But are we entitled at our pleasure to cut up an office originally one and undivided into two parts, an ordinary and an extraordinary? Is the person who does only a part of the duty entitled to claim the name or the office of him who did the whole? If Scripture warrant could be produced, of course all ground for objection would be removed; but in absence of Scripture warrant, what authority have we thus at our pleasure to rend an office in two? Moreover, if everything distinctive is dropped, he who performs the more common duties is surely not entitled to say that he continues to hold the office. If an apostle preached and baptized, he did so in common with the presbyters; if he ruled, he ruled in common with the presbyters; if he ordained, he ordained in common with the presbyters (Acts viii. 35–38, ix. 19; 1 Tim. v. 17, iv. 14). All these duties he performed in common with ministers of lower rank; but his wealth of miraculous power, his abundance of supernatural gifts, his peculiar testimony to the resurrection, and his personal appointment by the Lord,—these were entirely his own, and the possession of these was the proof of his apostleship. When these die out, the apostle dies out. Without these, men may continue to preach and to rule, to baptize and to ordain; but call themselves what they like, they are not apostles—they are, in fact, only very common clay. A man may possibly follow Paul or Peter in superintending Churches or in a few ordinary duties; but if he do no more, he is only a superintendent, a prelate, a diocesan bishop, or whatever other name fits a man whose work is jurisdiction merely; he is not an apostle. It is not competent for a man to undertake to fulfil only one-third or one-fourth the duties of an office, and then on this ground to claim the office. The apostleship is a unity; it is a combination of gifts, and functions, and duties; we are not free to cut it up and divide it at our pleasure; and if we do so, we have no right to call the half of it by the name of the whole. The apostleship must be handed down entire, or else vanish away.

3. The distinctive work of an apostle and that of a prelate

differ widely from each other. The commission of the apostle was to disciple all nations—to preach the gospel to every creature—to be Christ's witnesses not only to Palestine, but to the uttermost part of the earth (Matt. xxviii. 18–20; Mark xvi. 15; Acts i. 8). The distinctive work of a prelate is to govern a district consisting of pastors and Churches, to ordain, to confirm, and to consecrate. The special work of each appears so very dissimilar, that it is hard to believe that the office of the one is continued in the other.

4. Special significance attaches to the number of the apostles. The "twelve" corresponded to the twelve tribes of Israel. Till the time when the new organization was in an advanced condition, the vacancies which occurred in the original number were regularly filled, and at no time were more apostles living than twelve. When Judas by transgression fell, Matthias succeeded to the vacant position. When James the brother of John was slain by Herod, Paul, already converted, is advanced to the seat thus left empty, and enters on the work to which he had been specially appointed of God (Acts xxvi. 16–18). The statement of Rev. xxi. 14 implies that the number is permanent, and that it was not intended that it should be exceeded—"The walls of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." Tertullian saw in the facts of the Old Testament a type of the number of the apostles:—

"Why was it that He chose twelve apostles, and not some other number? In truth, I might from this very point conclude of my Christ, that He was foretold, not only by the words of prophets, but by the indication of facts. For of this number I find figurative hints up and down the Creator's dispensation; in the twelve springs of Elim, in the twelve gems of Aaron's priestly vestment, and in the twelve stones appointed by Joshua to be taken out of the Jordan, and set up for the ark of the covenant."[1]

Whether the fountains, and the gems, and the stones of Jordan were in reality types of the twelve apostles, it is not necessary for us to offer an opinion; it is sufficient to observe that an intelligent Christian writer who lived in the end of the second century, and who must have known whether the

[1] *Against Marcion*, iv. 13.

apostleship was perpetuated in the bishop, considered the number of persons entitled to rank as apostles to be twelve and no more. By what authority, may we ask, has this number ever been exceeded. If we are to have successors to the apostles, why should the number be more than twelve ?

5. An apostle in any Church where he was present performed the duties of any Church office inferior to his own, if there was need for his doing so. Where deacons were not yet appointed, he served tables; where presbyters were not yet appointed, he ruled with diligence, and laboured in word and doctrine. Though not like a modern bishop confined to any diocesan limits, he exercised a general superintendence and care over the Churches. But if his functions are split up into sections, the claims of presbyter and deacon, or indeed of any officer now doing work once done by an apostle, to be a successor of the apostles, are as valid as that of a prelate. The prelate claims to succeed the apostles, because he superintends pastors and Churches; but the claims of the presbyter are equally valid, inasmuch as he, like an apostle, preaches and baptizes; while the deacon may put in a similar claim, because he, like an apostle, attends to the necessities of the poor. We thus reach the conclusion that the Christian ministry, who do the ordinary work of the apostles, each order doing a portion of the work that apostles once did, may so far be said to succeed them.[1] The claim of each is valid so far as each does a part of the work which an apostle once did; but none of them, whether deacon, presbyter, or prelate, succeeds to the apostolic office. If any did, it is not the diocesan bishop who would have the first claim. An apostle calls himself an elder —πρεσβύτερος (1 Pet. v. 1; 2 John 1); and a minister— διάκονος (Eph. iii. 7; Col. i. 17); but he never calls himself a bishop—ἐπίσκοπος—or prelate. Had he only called himself a bishop on one solitary occasion, as he has called himself elder and deacon, many a man ready to believe on the most slender evidence what he wishes to be true, would have

[1] The Ritualists would scarcely deny this, for they state—"The apostles and their successors have in every age committed portions of their authority and power to others, who thus become their delegates, and in a measure their representatives, and are called priests and deacons." *Tracts for the Times*, No. 7.

deemed that to be conclusive. But the fact is that no inferior officer can hold the apostolic office. The successor of a king must be a king; he cannot be a justice of the peace or a barony constable. So the successor of an apostle must be no less than an apostle; he cannot be a pastor or diocesan bishop.

6. The apostles, as prelatical writers allege, "marked out for themselves distinct provinces, so that each had his own diocese, as it were, his own peculiar sphere of duty and authority." The "diocese," as the name of an ecclesiastical district, was unknown till the fourth century; so that it would be hard to find in Scripture any authority for each having his own *diocese*. The utmost that can be claimed in this direction is, that in one case, we know, there was a division of labour; Paul went to the Gentiles, Peter to the circumcision, so that the diocese of each, if it can so be called, was somewhat large. Paul, it is known, laboured in Syria, Cyprus, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, and Italy. Peter laboured in Judea and Samaria, in Antioch and Babylonia, and addressed an apostolic letter to the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. If these were dioceses, the dioceses must have overlapped more than a little. Tradition has indeed assigned dioceses to the others, but no scriptural or historical authority bears out the statement. The affirmation is the result of a style of reasoning only too common—"The Church has this or the other practice now, therefore she had this practice from the first; bishops are found to govern dioceses in the fourth and fifth centuries, therefore bishops of the same kind existed in the first and second centuries, and they had dioceses too." The reasoning might be plausible if the human elements which compose the Church never altered, if the opinions of Church members and Church officers never shifted, if Church customs and Church forms never varied, if the Church of God, like its King and Head, was during its sojourn in the world "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." For seven years after the resurrection the twelve remained at Jerusalem. If they were prelates, there were twelve of them during all that time labouring in a single Church; but the Fathers, and indeed the moderns too, regard it as little short of scandal that in one Church there

should be two bishops.[1] The explanation is that a prelate is one thing and an apostle another; the more apostles in a Church, the better for the Church; but the prelate stands upon his dignity—he can bear "no brother near the throne."

7. There is nothing in Scripture, rightly interpreted, which obliges us to believe that the apostolic office was to survive in the Church after the twelve had passed away. Two passages, we know, are quoted in favour of its continuance:—

> But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him: but some doubted. And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, *I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*—MATT. xxviii. 16–20.
>
> He gave *some to be apostles;* and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ; *till* we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.—EPH. iv. 11–13.

The weight of the argument founded on the commission depends on the supposition that it was addressed to the eleven *alone*. But this is doubtful. The words were spoken on the mountain of Galilee, which was the appointed place for a general meeting, and where it is generally understood He was seen by the "five hundred brethren at once" (Matt. xxviii. 10; 1 Cor. xv. 6). Of those to whom Christ spoke on the occasion "some doubted;" which might be true of some who now saw the risen Lord for the first time, but scarcely of the eleven, who had repeated proofs of the fact of His resurrection. The words, as we hold, were addressed to the eleven, and to the other disciples present on the occasion, representative of the general body of His disciples till the end of time. No doubt the promise is perpetual; but we cannot infer from that that the

[1] "When a bishop is once made and approved by the testimony and judgment of his colleagues and the people, another can by no means be appointed." Cyprian, *Epistle* xl. 2.

office of some of them is perpetual; it is enough to make the promise good that the work of teaching and baptizing is perpetual, and that Christ's disciples shall continue to do the work till the end of time. Certain it is, that the promise was not to the apostles personally, for they did not live on earth till the end of the world to claim and enjoy the promise. If we say the promise was to the apostles and to their successors, this raises some rather knotty questions. Had the apostles, as such, any successors in their apostolic office? Who were their successors? For "apostles whom He had chosen" to be succeeded by prelates whom He had not chosen, that were a descent indeed. Was not the promise of the commission made to persons whose special work is to disciple all nations by teaching all that Christ has commanded, and by baptizing them? and can any class of persons legitimately claim the promise who do not attempt to do the work? What title to the promise can be fairly put forward by any man who may indeed preach and baptize occasionally, but whose special work—the very work for which he exists as a prelate—is not baptism and instruction, but ordination and jurisdiction, confirmation and consecration? If, as Dr. Stillingfleet [1] asserts, the promise is to "them and to all that *succeed them in the office of teaching and baptizing* to the world's end," the claim of the pastor to the promise is as strong as that of the prelate, and that of the evangelist or missionary a little stronger than either.

We can see nothing inconsistent with the facts of the Biblical narrative in our view of the subject. The words of the Lord Jesus were spoken on a mountain in Galilee, in presence of five hundred disciples. They were addressed primarily to the eleven, but secondarily to the brethren—the nucleus of the new kingdom about to be set up among men. It sets before them and before all Christians the grand work for which they are to labour, — "making disciples of all nations,"—the evangelization of the world. It sets before them the instrumentality that the Church is to use, instruction and baptism; it states the blessing to accompany all who take part in that work till the end of time. All is stated in a general way, for the time is not yet come when shall be revealed the particular ministers and agencies to be employed,

[1] *Irenicum*, p. 164.

the officials appointed to administer rites, or the special ways in which the nations are to be enlightened; but the grand work to be done, the moral methods to be used, and the persons responsible for the performance of the work, namely, Christian ministers and Christian people, all this is clear as the sun. But we cannot see in the words of Jesus any intimation whatever that, when the apostles die, prelates alone are to succeed them and claim the promise, whether they do the work or do it not. There is a sense in which the apostles, by the words that they wrote and spoke, and which are still repeated in every clime where the gospel is preached, are still discipling the nations; but in that sense the humblest minister of the Church, when he reads their writings in public, when he preaches the truth that they preached, and baptizes after their example in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, has as good a right under the commission to claim the presence and blessing of the Lord Jesus, as either the Pope of Rome, the Archbishop of Canterbury, or the Patriarch of Moscow.

The passage in Ephesians is not more satisfactory for the purpose for which it is cited. In this application it proves a little too much. The argument of the text is as strong for the perpetuity of prophets as for that of the apostles. If either one class or the other is a permanent office in the Church, no doubt a specimen can be produced. Produce your apostle, and let us examine his credentials. Let us see his qualifications, ascertain his functions, witness his signs, and examine his work. Let us see how he looks beside Peter and Paul. The text in the Epistle to the Ephesians simply asserts that the Christian ministry, of whatever elements it is composed, shall continue in the Church until the purposes for which it was originally given are completed; but the passage in question does not decide which of the Church officers are temporary and which are permanent. That point is determined by other passages and by other considerations. We feel justified, therefore, in saying that no passage in the Scriptures holds out the hope of the apostleship as a permanent and ever-present possession of the Church.

8. The rank of an apostle in a secondary degree has been claimed for some persons named in the New Testament who are

not of the twelve. If the application of the name, without any transfer of powers, constitutes a secondary apostle, this may be admitted; we take exception only to the inference drawn from it, that the twelve were to have successors in their own order. The application of the name can be accounted for without any such inference. It must be remembered that the word ἀπόστολος, like the word πρεσβύτερος, has a literal as well as an official sense. It means literally *one sent forth, a messenger*, and it may with propriety be applied to a person sent out on any business whatever, as well as in its more limited sense of one specially appointed like the twelve, and sent forth by Christ. In this literal sense it is applied in Acts xiv. 4, 14, to Barnabas and Saul, who were sent forth by the Church at Antioch, and before the latter was raised to the real apostolic dignity (Acts xiii. 1–3). Some indeed, on the ground of this application, raise Barnabas to the rank of the twelve;[1] but there were not two apostles "born out of due time," and beyond the exigencies of argument there is no necessity for understanding the word in any but the literal sense. Epaphroditus, in like manner, is styled in Phil. ii. 25 your *messenger* [ἀπόστολον], because he was sent forth by the Church at Philippi to relieve the necessities of Paul. The word is also used in 2 Cor. viii. 23 in the same literal sense, "the messengers of the Churches" [ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν]. Timothy and Titus could not have been apostles, owing to the fact that their late conversion made it impossible for them to have seen the risen Lord;[2] while it would be without precedent for one apostle to address two others in the style in which Paul addresses them in the Pastoral Epistles. Besides, Timothy and Sosthenes, whose names Paul joins with his own in writing some of his Epistles, are expressly excluded from the apostleship by such passages as 1 Cor. i. 1; 2 Cor. i. 1, and Col. i. 1. Andronicus and Junias were not apostles, although "of note among the apostles" (Rom. xvi. 7); for, without adopting the opinion of Chrysostom, whose codex probably read *Junia*, that the latter of the two was a woman,

[1] "The name *apostle* . . . was reserved to the twelve appointed by Him, and was not assumed by any other except St. Matthias, St. Paul, and St. Barnabas." *Theophilus Anglicanus*, chap. x. p. 89.

[2] Lightfoot on *Galatians*, p. 98.

both might be held by the apostles in high repute without either claiming the apostolic rank. In writing to the Thessalonians, Paul connects the name of Silas with his own ; but that no more proves Silas an apostle in the higher sense, than the letter of the apostolic Council in Acts xv. proves that the "brethren" occupied the same rank with the apostles who are named first in the letter. Instead of making out a claim of apostleship for these persons, some of whom were rather commonplace individuals, it would be far more plausible to say with Newman—"While apostles were on earth, there was need neither for bishop nor pope." [1]

It has been alleged that the extension of the apostleship beyond the twelve is the only ground on which the false apostles mentioned in 2 Cor. xi. 13 could rest their pretensions. There have been indeed in all ages, and never more so than now, pretenders to the apostolic office—men of whom Paul in his day spoke as "false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ." But the inference which it is sought to draw from this fact is more than balanced by the other fact, that if the number of apostles had not been restricted to twelve, and if it had been the custom to perpetuate the apostles either in prelates, or in what are now called secondary apostles, there would have been no reason in the Judaizers denying the apostleship of Paul. Their denial of his apostolic rank was simply an appeal to the deep-rooted conviction in the Christian mind of the first century, that none except the twelve was entitled to the name ; and the notion of any continuation of the apostleship is overthrown completely by the fact that in answer to these errorists he argued that his is an exceptional case, that he had received a special qualification and call, and that he was one "born out of due time."

The Bishop of St. Andrews attempts to strengthen his argument by alleging, that "the ancient Fathers not only call the apostles bishops," but they "have also called bishops apostles." [2] That may weigh something with those who make the Fathers their rule of faith ; but it does not go for much with anybody who knows what the writings of the Fathers are. After the Church in the fourth century was taken into alliance with the State, and prelates in the pride of their

[1] *Essay on Development*, p. 165. [2] *Outlines*, p. 81.

hearts began to usurp the place and assume the dignity of apostles, we have no doubt that some of them laid claim to the name, and accepted it when flattery ascribed it to them; but the instances before Constantine are not numerous, and are all capable of explanation, if we remember that the word possesses not only an official, but a literal and figurative sense. When Epaphroditus is called "the apostle" of the Philippians, because he was sent forth to carry the fruits of their liberality to Paul, or when Columba is called "the apostle" of the Picts, or Patrick "the apostle" of Ireland, there is no mistaking the literal application in the former, and the figurative in the latter.

The Fathers of the second century clearly understood that the apostles passed out of the world with the last of the twelve. This is evident from a passage of Hegesippus, who wrote about 180 A.D., and which is worthy of attention for various reasons. We take the extract from Eusebius:—

"The same author [Hegesippus] relating the events of the times says, that the Church continued until then a pure and uncorrupt virgin, whilst if there were any at all that attempted to corrupt the sound rule of the preaching of salvation, they were still skulking in dark retreats. But as soon as the sacred choir of apostles died a happy death, and the generation which had been counted worthy to hear their words of divine wisdom passed away, the constitution received the beginning of atheistic error through the deception of false teachers. They also, *when there was none of the apostles left*, afterwards barefacedly undertook to preach the knowledge falsely so called [he refers here to the Gnostics], in opposition to the gospel of truth."[1]

This important passage marks two points very distinctly: first, that the loss of purity and the rise of error into prominence date from before the time of Hegesippus, who lived near the end of the second century—the very period from which we date the rise of Prelacy in the Church; and second, that the departure of the apostles at the close of the first century clears the ground for errorists to appear. If, when the twelve died, they had left apostles in the world behind them, false doctrine would have had as little chance in the second century as in the first.

[1] Eusebius, *H. E.* iii. 32.

9. The Bishop of St. Andrews counts it to be τὸ πρῶτον ψεῦδος, that is, *the first lie*, that the Assembly of Divines calls apostles, prophets, and evangelists, extraordinary Church officers "who are ceased," and classes "pastors, other Church governors, and deacons" as "ordinary and perpetual."[1] We are not sure that this is a lie of any kind; but if it is an error, either unintentional or designed, Dr. Wordsworth can easily correct it by showing that apostles and prophets are still in existence. Let him produce his apostle. Let him show his prophet. Till he, or somebody on his behalf, has done this, we prefer to go with the Westminster Divines rather than with Bishop Wordsworth.

Before condemning the Divines for "the first lie," he should not have omitted to tell his readers that the distinction between extraordinary and ordinary ministers in the apostolic age is much older than the Westminster Assembly, and has been taught by some of the ablest theologians of the Anglican Church.

The *Second Book of Discipline*, adopted by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1578—a time when the oldest members of the Westminster Assembly were as yet in their cradles—makes this very distinction:—

"There be three extraordinary functions, the office of the apostle, of the evangelist, and of the prophet, which are not perpetual, and now have ceased in the Kirk of God, except when it pleased God extraordinarily to steir [raise] some of them up again. There are four ordinary functions or offices in the Kirk of God, the office of the pastor, minister, or bishop; the doctor; the presbyter or elder, and the deacon."[2]

Then Bishop BARROW states the case in words whose truth will commend themselves to every unprejudiced reader:—

"The apostolical office was extraordinary, conferred in a special manner, designed for special purposes, discharged by special aids, endowed with special privileges, as was needful for the propagation of Christianity and the founding of Churches. To that office it was requisite that the person should have an immediate designation from God—that he should be able to attest our Lord's resurrection, that he should be able to impart spiritual gifts, that he should instruct all

[1] *Outlines*, p. 80.

[2] *Second Book of Discipline*, ii. 6.

nations in the doctrine and law of Christ, that he should govern in an absolute manner as being guided by infallible assistance, and that he should have authority to found Churches, to constitute pastors, to settle orders, and to perform all such acts of spiritual power by virtue of the same divine assistance. Now such an office was not designed to continue by derivation; for it contained in it divers things which evidently were not communicable, and which no man in after times, without gross imposture and hypocrisy, could challenge to himself. Neither did the apostles profess to communicate it. They did indeed appoint standing pastors and teachers in each Church. They did assume fellow-labourers in the work of preaching and governance. But they did not constitute apostles like themselves. Their apostolic office expired with their persons." [1]

Archbishop POTTER also favours the same opinion when he says:—

"It is plain through the Acts and Epistles, that prophets and pastors were of a higher order than evangelists and teachers; so that by this interpretation there were two distinct orders of a different kind, and a third order of apostles superior to them both. But then it is not easy to give a distinct and certain account, what were the particular offices of these persons, and *which of them were extraordinary and temporary*, and *which designed for the constant and lasting use of the Church*, since the Scriptures do not speak clearly, and learned men have differed in their judgment about them." [2]

From this last extract it is clear that Archbishop Potter drew the distinction which Dr. Wordsworth calls "the first lie," although he found it difficult to say which were the "extraordinary and temporary," and which were "the constant and lasting;" while he sees no magic in the number *three*, for according to his enumeration the deacons would constitute a *fourth* order in the Christian ministry.

Bishop LIGHTFOOT also sanctions the "πρῶτον ψεῦδος," when he classes apostles, prophets, and evangelists under one

[1] Cited in Crawford's *Presbyterianism defended*, from Barrow's *Works*, vol. i. pp. 72–74.

[2] Potter's *Discourse of Church Government*, iii. 3, p. 66.

head, and under another "the permanent ministry," which he explains to mean "pastors, teachers, helps, governments." [1]

These extracts are enough to show that some others, both before and after the Westminster Divines, have fallen into what Dr. Wordsworth calls the "fundamental mistake."

10. The statement already quoted from Dr. Wordsworth, that the Christian Fathers "have called the bishops, apostles," deserves a little further notice, not that it matters anything to the real question what they call the bishops, but with the view of showing how little ground there is for the statement in the Ante-Nicene literature, that is, previous to the time when the expansion of the bishop or pastor into the prelate made it necessary to support his assumption of supremacy by every possible means. We select a few of these statements which seem to touch the point at issue:—

The DIDACHE (about 90 A.D.):—"Now with regard to the apostles and prophets, according to the decree of the gospel, so do ye. Let every apostle that cometh to you be received as the Lord. But he shall not remain longer than one day; and, if need be, another day also; but if he remain three days, he is a false prophet. And when the apostle departeth, let him take nothing except bread till he reach his lodging. But if he ask for money, he is a false prophet." [2] Here the word ἀπόστολος is used in its literal sense, as in Acts xiv. 4, or Phil. ii. 25, and is applied, not to any of the twelve, but to an evangelist or other itinerating minister *sent forth* to spread the gospel. He was not to make a long stay in one place, or to ask for money, on pain of being counted an impostor. Such agents moving from place to place were not prelates, or even bishops in any sense of the word.

CLEMENT of Rome (96 A.D.):—"Christ therefore was sent forth by God, and the apostles by Christ. Both these appointments, then, were made in an orderly way according to the will of God. Having therefore received their orders, and being fully assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and established in the word of God, with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand. And thus preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first-fruits, having

[1] Lightfoot, *On Philippians*, p. 183. [2] Chap. xi. 3–6.

first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterwards believe."[1] According to this testimony, the officers appointed by the apostles in each city were "bishops and deacons," but he never hints that the congregational officers thus appointed were apostles.

BARNABAS (119):—"The boys that sprinkle are those that have proclaimed to us the remission of sins and purification of the heart. To these He gave authority to preach the gospel, being twelve in number, corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel."[2] Barnabas is explaining the type of the red heifer; the boys who sprinkle the ashes correspond to the apostles. He mentions that they were twelve in number, that Christ gave them authority to preach the gospel, and that in substance this gospel is remission of sin and purification of the heart. He limits the title to the twelve, whom he had already so designated; but he does not bestow the title upon ordinary ministers.[3]

The author of the *Epistle to Diognetus* (about 130) speaks of himself, not as an "apostle," but their "disciple." "Having been a disciple of the apostles, I am become a teacher of the Gentiles."[4] We know too little of this modest and excellent author to say much of him; but this much is evident, that he does not claim the apostleship either for himself or for any of his contemporaries.

HERMAS (150) does not use the term with much precision, but it is evident that he employs it to indicate a separate class from bishops and teachers. "These mountains are the twelve tribes which inhabit the whole world: the Son of God accordingly was preached unto them by the apostles."[5] And in another place he speaks of "apostles and teachers who preached to the whole world, and who taught solemnly and purely the word of the Lord."[6] Hermas evidently uses the term in a loose sense, but there is nothing to indicate that he means by it the stationary ministers of the Church.

IRENÆUS (182–185) and TERTULLIAN (190–220) both use the word *apostle* in the literal sense, and apply it to the seventy *sent forth* by Christ no less than to the twelve.

[1] 1 *Corinthians*, chap. xlii.
[2] *Epistle*, chap. viii.
[3] See chap. v.
[4] *Ep. to Diognetus*, chap. xi.
[5] *Pastor, Sim.* ix. 17.
[6] *Sim.* ix. 25.

Irenæus says, "After the twelve apostles, our Lord is found to have sent forth seventy others before Him."[1] And Tertullian says, "He chose seventy other apostles beside the twelve."[2] Irenæus correctly distinguishes Matthew and John from Mark and Luke; the two former are apostles, but Mark is described as "the disciple of Peter," and Luke as "the companion of Paul."[3] He does not elevate either to the rank of a "secondary apostle." Tertullian calls Barnabas an apostle, as he was justified in doing by Acts xiv. 4; but in his work, *Against Marcion*, he draws a sharp contrast between the apostles and those who come after them. "Luke," says he, "was not an apostle, but only an apostolic man."[4]

Clement of Alexandria (190–220) calls his namesake Clement of Rome "an apostle;"[5] but that worthy man neither takes it to himself, nor applies it to any other not directly sent forth by the Lord. This is the first instance of the word being applied to an ordinary pastor. The name is applied by Alexandrinus, not in the exact manner of preceding writers, but in that loose and figurative way in which it may be applied to an eminent minister who associated with the apostles. He thought by the title to honour a fellow-worker, of whom even Paul said that his name is in the book of life (Phil. iv. 3).

Eusebius of Cæsarea (313–340), the celebrated historian, and the friend of the Emperor Constantine, after referring to various persons whom tradition in his time placed among the seventy, says, "Besides these there was still a considerable number who were apostles in imitation of the twelve."[6] That he uses the word here, not in the sense of pastors of Churches or prelates, but in some such sense as it is used in the *Didache*, is evident from the explanation which he gives in another part of his *History*. Speaking of the reign of Trajan (98–117), he says:—

"There were many others also noted in those times who held the first rank of the succession of the apostles.[7] These, as the holy disciples of such men, also built up the Churches,

[1] Irenæus, *Heresies*, ii. 21. 1.
[2] Tert. *Marcion*, iv. 24.
[3] *Heresies*, iii. 1. 1.
[4] *Against Marcion*, iv. 2.
[5] *Stromata*, iv. 17.
[6] *Ecc. Hist.* i. 12.
[7] τὴν πρώτην τάξιν τῆς τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐπέχοντες διαδοχῆς.

where foundations had been previously laid in every place by the apostles. They augmented the means of promulgating the gospel more and more, and spread the seeds of salvation and of the heavenly kingdom throughout the world far and wide. For the most part of the disciples at that time, animated with a more ardent love of the divine word, had first fulfilled the Saviour's precept by distributing their substance to the needy. Afterwards leaving their country, they performed the office of evangelists to those who had not yet heard the faith; whilst, with a noble ambition to proclaim Christ, they also delivered to them the books of the holy Gospels. After laying the foundation of the faith in foreign parts as the particular object of their mission, and after appointing others as shepherds of the flocks, and committing to these the care of those that had been recently introduced, they went again to other regions and nations, with the grace and co-operation of God."[1]

By the "first rank of the succession of the apostles," Eusebius means the first generation of preachers who in point of time followed the apostles; and this beautiful extract from the historian shows the meaning which he attached to those apostles in a secondary degree. They were not apostles in the sense in which Andrew and Thomas were apostles, nor pastors of Churches, nor prelates, that is, pastors of pastors in districts already christianized; but they were evangelists who, imitating the apostles already departed, preached the gospel to the unconverted, planted Churches, and appointed over the converts bishops and deacons.

Writers after the establishment of Christianity come too late to be cited as witnesses to facts said to have occurred in the second century or earlier; but the opinions of some of them are worth giving, as showing that they well knew the difference between the apostles of Christ and the prelates of their own time.

Hilary the deacon (354), usually spoken of by the old divines as Ambrosiaster, commenting on Eph. iv. 11, says, "The apostles are bishops."[2] This is quite true, no doubt, in the sense so often explained, that every inferior office which Christ has placed in the Church is included in the apostolic

[1] *Ecc. Hist.* iii. 37. [2] Migne, *Pat. Lat.* xvii. c. 387.

office, the highest of all. But what does he mean by a bishop? Is it the bishop of a single Church, or is it the bishop of a diocese containing many Churches? Besides, there is all the difference in the world between saying that "The apostles are bishops," and saying that "The bishops are apostles." Every judge is presumed to be a lawyer, but it does not follow that every lawyer is a judge.

CHRYSOSTOM (377–407), himself a diocesan bishop, speaking of the seven deacons in the Church at Jerusalem, says, "As yet there were no bishops, but apostles only."[1] He did not commit the error of identifying two offices so radically distinct.

JEROME (380–420) gives a definition of apostles which excludes bishops: "All who had seen the Lord, and afterwards preached Him, were called apostles."[2]

THEODORET (387–450), in his comment on 1 Tim. iii. 1, makes a remark which has often been quoted by prelatic writers since, and which, as we suspect, is the source of Dr. Wordsworth's allegation that the Christian Fathers were accustomed to call the diocesan bishops of their age apostles:—

"Those now called bishops, they named apostles; but in the succeeding times they left the name of the apostleship to those who were apostles in truth, but that of the episcopate they put on those who were formerly called apostles."

Bishop Lightfoot states that this sentiment of Theodoret is borrowed from Theodore of Mopsuestia, whose Nestorian heresy gave such trouble to the Church; and he proceeds to demolish it effectively in the following words:—

"That the same officers in the Church who were first designated apostles came afterwards to be designated bishops, is baseless. If the two names had been identical, the substitution of the one name for the other would have required some explanation. But, in fact, the functions of the apostle and the bishop differed widely. The apostle, like the prophet or the evangelist, held no *local* office. He was essentially, as his name denotes, a missionary, moving about from place to place, founding and confirming new brother-

[1] *Homily* on Acts xiv.

[2] Cited in Lightfoot, *On the Galatians*, p. 254, *note*.

hoods. The only ground on which Theodoret builds his theory is a false interpretation of a passage in St. Paul."[1]

11. Bishop Lightfoot has also advanced strong reasons for believing, not that the apostle of the first century broadened down into the bishop or prelate of the third, but that the prelate gradually developed out of the presiding presbyter of the second century. This has always been the Presbyterian view of the case. By various steps the elder or bishop, who in the first century presided among his colleagues, became permanent in the latter part of the second century as the bishop of a congregation, and in the end of the third was in all the larger cities the head of various congregations and of many presbyters. The congregational bishop developed into a prelate, and the parish [*παροικία*] became a diocese [*διοίκησις*]. This latest development, begun in the third century in all the larger cities, was only complete in the fifth. But this is a little too late for it to obtain the stamp of divine authority. It is the approved practice of the first century that is our guide.

Dr. Lightfoot's view of the case is confirmed by the fact that the Christian literature of the first and second century, inspired or uninspired, has no name for what is now called a prelate or diocesan bishop, that is, a Church officer in charge of a defined district, with pastors and Churches under him, inferior to an apostle, but superior to the ordinary pastor of a congregation. Able defenders of the prelatic system like Mr. Haddan admit this. "St. Clement," says he, "has naturally no term at hand whereby to express the specially episcopal office."[2] This statement of Mr. Haddan is virtually an admission that the thing is not named in the New Testament, else Clement would have the term at hand. Does any man suppose that, if the especially episcopal office existed before A.D. 96, when Clement wrote his Epistle to the Corinthians, he would not have had at his hand a name to express it. An object or an institution is seldom half-an-hour in existence till a name for it is found. The very fact that no distinctive name was known for the office in the time of Clement, or before the middle of the second century, is

[1] *Comment. on Philippians*, pp. 193, 194.
[2] Haddan's *Apostolical Succession*, p. 105.

strong evidence, all the stronger because undesigned, that the office itself did not exist before that time. It is not till we pass the year 150 A.D. that genuine Christian writers begin to speak of "*the* bishop," and to mark off the presiding presbyter from the other presbyters or bishops of the congregation in which he presided. The term "*the* bishop," to distinguish the president from the other bishops in charge of the flock, is not used in the *Didache*, in Clement, Hermas, Justin Martyr, Polycarp, or in any genuine writer who wrote before the middle of the second century. When it does appear, the new name, or, as it is in this case, an old name with a new and more definite application, indicates that a new office has come into existence. It first makes its appearance in Irenæus and Tertullian, after which it grows common enough. The Ignatian Epistles, indeed, speak of "*the* bishop" very often; but they were written, as we believe, not by the martyr, but by another in his name, with the very object of making it easier for *the* bishop or presiding minister to secure supremacy over his colleagues.

The conclusion that we reach on the subject is not very different from that reached by an honest Episcopalian writer, who says:—

"Certain functions which the apostles exercised continued to be exercised by the ordinary ministers of the Church; but the apostolic office ended with the persons of the apostles, and has never since been vouchsafed to the Church."[1]

POSITION OF JAMES AT JERUSALEM.

The argument for the prelatic system, based upon the position which James occupied at Jerusalem prior to the destruction of that city, is of recent years made very important by the fact, that Dr. Lightfoot admits that James is the only case in the New Testament in which is found an example of the modern bishop. His words are:—

"James the Lord's brother alone, within the period compassed by the apostolic writings, can claim to be regarded as a bishop in the later and more special sense of the term."[2]

[1] Litton's *Church of Christ*, p. 409. [2] *Philippians*, p. 195.

Dr. Lightfoot is quite consistent in holding this opinion; but we cannot say so much for Dr. Wordsworth, who, while holding all the apostles to be bishops, pronounces James to be "the *earliest* bishop of the Christian Church."[1] The Bishop of Durham, however, with the solitary exception of James, rests his whole argument for diocesan episcopacy on something outside the Bible—on purely historical grounds. His one scriptural argument we are now to consider.

There is a twofold question in regard to James, one bearing on his personality, the other on his official position; but they are so closely connected with each other that they cannot be separated.

In regard to his personality, three opinions differing somewhat from each other are as old as the fourth century:—

1. The *half-brother*, or Helvidian theory, teaches that James was the son of Joseph and Mary, born after Jesus, and therefore in reality half-brother of the Lord. This opinion was first advocated by one Helvidius, a schismatic, who lived at Rome about the year 380; and it has been put forward in recent times by various Protestant writers, among whom may be named Dr. Eadie, Dean Alford, Canon Farrar, and many Germans. Its opposition, however, to the notion of the perpetual virginity of Mary, keeps it from finding favour with Roman Catholics.

2. The *cousin*, or Jeromian theory, is that James was the son of the other Mary, sister to the Virgin, and wife of Alphæus or Cleophas, and therefore by the mother's side full cousin to the Lord. In that case he was the "Lord's brother" simply in the sense of being a blood relation. The reasons on which this opinion is founded are clearly set forth by Mr. Meyrick in his article "James," in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible.*

3. The *kinsman*, or Epiphanian theory, maintains that James was the son of Joseph, the husband of Mary, by a previous marriage. In this case he could scarcely be called a blood relation of the Lord; but being the son of His reputed father, he would be nominally His brother, and would probably be spoken of as such. This theory, as well as the cousin theory, keeps safe the perpetual virginity; but the perpetual

[1] *Outlines*, p. 62.

virginity not being a matter of divine revelation, but a mere speculative inference founded on the false notion that virginity is a holier condition than marriage, does not deserve to be taken into account. This is the view taken by the leading Greek Fathers, Origen, Eusebius, Gregory of Nyssa, and others, and is still popular in the Greek Church; while among the moderns it finds leading supporters in Bishop Lightfoot and Dr. Plumptre.

None of these three theories is free from difficulties, and yet for every one of them much can be said. The cousin theory has its difficulties also; but mainly on the grounds stated by Mr. Meyrick, I agree in its general conclusion, that James the Lord's brother is identical with James the Little, that he was the son of Alphæus or Cleophas, that his mother Mary was sister to the Virgin, that he was first cousin to the Lord, and that he was one of the twelve.

The personality of James is of some importance in the controversy, owing to the fact that it is used by theologians to account for the position which he held at Jerusalem towards the close of his life. On all sides it is admitted that he occupied a prominent place among the Christians of that city. How is that pre-eminence to be accounted for? Those who hold the half-brother theory account for it by saying, that he literally was "the Lord's brother," being the son of Mary. Those who hold the cousin theory account for his position by saying, that he was one of the twelve. Those who accept the kinsman theory, account for it by saying that he was the earliest prelate or bishop of the city. The question cannot be decided with certainty, and it is not necessary to enter upon an intricate discussion in regard to a small matter on which nothing new can be said. It is only a balancing of probabilities at best; but the weight of probability is, as I believe, in favour of Jerome's opinion, that James was one of the twelve apostles, and is repeatedly named in the scriptural lists (Matt. x. 3; Mark iii. 18). The passage, Gal. i. 19, is specially important, inasmuch as it ranks him among the apostles—"Other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." To any plain reader this expression would convey the idea that, in addition to Peter, James was the only apostle whom Paul saw on this visit to Jeru-

salem. It is noteworthy, moreover, that the inspired writer here speaks of the twelve, and does not use the word *apostle* in its literal sense of *messenger*, as it is on various occasions applied to Barnabas and others. In Gal. i. 19 it is applied to the special order of men commissioned by the Lord Himself.[1]

The exact official position which James occupied in Jerusalem is of more importance than his personality. An exaggerated importance has often been attached to it. Episcopal writers sometimes speak of him as if he were a full-blown prelate, provided with mitre and crozier and throne, and patent of nobility from Cæsar. Dr. Lightfoot, in words already cited, regards him as the only example in Scripture of a modern bishop; Dr. Wordsworth speaks of him as "the earliest bishop" in the Christian Church; and Mr. Haddan does not scruple to call him bluntly a "diocesan bishop." There are about nine passages of Scripture which refer remotely to the position of James, and it is important that the reader should have them all under his eye on the same page, that he may be able to judge whether they justify the claims to Episcopal supremacy put forward on his behalf by modern writers.

He [the Lord] was seen of James.—1 Cor. xv. 7.

He said, Tell these things to James and to the brethren.—Acts xii. 17.

After they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Brethren, hearken unto me . . . wherefore my judgment [ἐγὼ κρίνω] is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles turn to God.—Acts xv. 13–19.

The day following, Paul went in with us unto James, and all the elders were present.—Acts xxi. 18.

After three years I went up to Jerusalem, and tarried with him fifteen days; but other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.—Gal. i. 19.

[1] It is not likely to weigh much except with those who have subscribed the Anglican Articles, but it may be mentioned that the 39th identifies the writer of the Epistle of James in our New Testament with one of the twelve. It speaks of swearing as forbidden by our Lord Jesus Christ and by "James His *apostle*," evidently alluding to his *Epistle*, chap. v. 12. But it is agreed almost universally that the Epistle in question was written, not by James the brother of John, whose death is recorded in Acts xii., but by James the Less, "the Lord's brother."

James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship.—Gal. ii. 9.

Before that certain came from James, Peter did eat with the Gentiles; but when they came he separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision.—Gal. ii. 12.

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are of the dispersion, greeting.—Jas. i. 1.

Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him.—Jas. v. 14.

Let any man of intelligence read carefully over these nine passages, which, as we believe, are all that in the New Testament touch on the position of James, and then judge as to his claims to be a diocesan bishop. However carefully and often I read them, I cannot see in them—"the single president of a diocese who came in the room of the apostles, having presbyters, deacons, and laity under him, and possessing exclusive power of ordination, and primarily of confirmation, with primary authority in the administration of sacraments and of discipline."[1]

The full strength of the passages cited seems to be this. James is never mentioned as present after the ascension at any place whatever outside Jerusalem. He is found there on four separate occasions between A.D. 40 and 58. He is mentioned twice in connection with Cephas and John, and several times alone; the former fact showing that he ranked with the apostles, the latter that he was the only apostle in Jerusalem at the time. The place he occupied we may fairly infer was a place of prominence, but there is not the slightest hint in the narrative that his position there was that of a prelate.

Let it be observed that he is never called a bishop by any inspired writer, or receives any other name however remotely corresponding thereto. There is never ascribed to him any of those special acts which moderns hold that none but a prelate can do. It is not in evidence that he ever confirmed anybody whether old or young, primarily or secondarily; no ordination is recorded of him, if we leave out of account that

[1] Mr. Haddan's definition of a bishop. See Smith's *Christian Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 209.

of the seven deacons in which all the apostles united; no consecration, whether of building, of clay, wood, stone, oil, or water, is ever ascribed to him; nor is it clear that he exercised any jurisdiction outside the Church at Jerusalem. We cannot say, therefore, that we possess any evidence that he was what Dr. Lightfoot calls him, "a bishop in the later and more special sense of the term." Had he been so, he would have been a prelate "born out of due time," appearing prematurely two hundred years or so in advance of his order. A fact so unique and interesting, had it ever occurred, would surely have been stated in some form in the New Testament. In absence of some more decisive proof, we feel difficulty in supposing even that he filled the position of a diocesan bishop. If he did, why is there no mention of his diocese? How far did it extend? To the city alone, or to the city and surrounding villages, or to all Judea? What other bishop's territory did his territory touch? How did he stand related to other bishops residing in Jerusalem? Did he rule as bishop over them, or did he and they act as colleagues? If so, then they lost some of their power by making him their superior; if the latter, then one diocese was governed by several bishops at the same time — a state of things that modern Episcopacy denounces as a scandal.

There is nothing attributed to James by way of speech or act in any of the passages of Scripture, which might not be fairly said of an apostle who resided permanently at Jerusalem, when other apostles were absent on their missionary journeys, and visited the great city only occasionally. Jerusalem was the centre spot of Christianity, and the largest Church of the apostolic age. Jews from all parts of Syria, and Christians too, were in the habit of coming up there from all parts of the country to attend the feasts. An inspired man always on the spot to give instruction and counsel, as well as to preach the gospel, may have filled a sphere of usefulness as important as if he had gone forth travelling about the world. Who knows but there may have been some special qualification about "the Lord's brother," fitting him specially for such a post. Be this as it may, the apostolic history never presents him to us at any place outside the city. Is it not more reasonable, therefore, in these circumstances to regard him

as a resident apostle, rather than a diocesan bishop, who has no separate and distinctive place in the New Testament, and who only appears in later ages? As one of the twelve, he would, of course, hold the first place in the Church, conduct the public worship, preside among the elders met in presbytery, and govern the Christian congregation. Such acts would make him prominent enough; yet these are the acts that the pastor of a large city church is constantly called on to perform. This view is virtually admitted by Bishop Lightfoot, who calls James "a member of the presbytery," and elsewhere "the head or president of the college" of presbyters.[1] As an apostle he was fully entitled so to be, for in every Church an apostle by right of office took the first place. There is not a single fact mentioned about James in the Scriptures that is not consistent with his being resident apostle at Jerusalem in the latter years of his life; there is nothing whatever that can be regarded by any unprejudiced person as the distinctive mark of a bishop "in the later and more special sense of the term."

It is not necessary to undertake seriously the refutation of any statement made in a spurious document; but if there was one atom of truth in the unhistorical allegation of the Clementine forgery, to the effect that "James was ordained bishop by the Lord,"[2] — if by this word the forger means a diocesan bishop, it seems unaccountable that in a city, supposed to be subject to his episcopal rule, others in the earlier portion of the history take the lead, and James appears to be pushed aside. In Acts i., for example, it is not James but Peter who proposes the choice of a successor to Judas, and who afterwards addresses the multitude on the day of Pentecost. It is not James alone, but the apostles, who in Acts viii., when the Samaritans received the word of God, sent down to them Peter and John. The Jewish believers in Acts xi. call Peter to account for eating with the uncircumcised, and James is not mentioned as presiding at the trial. He was indeed present at the Apostolic Council, but there is not any sufficient proof that he acted as president; notwithstanding that this has often been asserted by modern writers, some

[1] *Commentary on Galatians*, p. 347; *Philippians*, p. 196.
[2] *Recognitions*, i. 43.

of whom wish to make it appear that he was a prelate, and others of whom copy the statements of other people, without taking the trouble to examine carefully on their own behalf the facts of the case. Roman Catholics maintain that Peter was president at this Council because he spoke first, and Episcopalian writers maintain that James was president because he spoke last,—two statements which in point of value may be held to balance each other. If James was not an apostle, but, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, a bishop "in the later and more special sense," on the ground of a remote relationship to the Lord, this would present us with the strange anomaly of a prelate presiding in an assembly where Peter and Paul sat as members, and addressing the man to whom the Lord Himself gave the keys of the kingdom in the words of our Authorized English Version, "wherefore my *sentence* is." In that case we would be bound to have a new reading of 1 Cor. xii. 28. It would be no longer—"First, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers;" henceforth it would be—first, bishops; secondly, apostles; and thirdly, prophets, etc.

James, however, spoke at the Apostolic Council and proposed the resolution which was accepted and became the decision of the Council. In the course of his speech he used the words διὸ ἐγὼ κρίνω — translated in the Authorized Version, "wherefore *my sentence* is," which, they tell us, conveys to the unlearned that he spoke as a judge, and occupied a position of pre-eminence over the apostles. But this is not borne out by the language used. The verb κρίνω, like the English word *judge*, is not by any means limited to pronouncing the deliberate decree of a judge speaking with authority from the bench of justice. It is often used to express mere individual opinion; thus in Acts xvi. 15, "If ye have judged [κεκρίκατε] me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house."[1] James in Acts xv. 19 simply states his individual opinion or judgment in the case before the Council, as the Revised Version brings out in the translation, "wherefore my judgment is,"—an individual opinion which ultimately becomes the finding, and is adopted in the decree.

[1] See also Acts iv. 19, xxvi. 8, for similar use of the word where judicial sentence is precluded, and private opinion deliberately formed is alone expressed.

Such are the facts of the case, furnishing not the slightest ground for regarding James as the president of the Apostolic Council. Who was president, if it had a president, we are not informed. Neither in the narrative nor decree, is James mentioned either as president of the Council or diocesan bishop. Nothing is said which necessarily implies that he held either the one position or the other. The omission suggests that he was not received in this capacity by the apostles and elders, any more than by ourselves. Beyond what might be said or done by any influential member of an ecclesiastical assembly met for grave deliberation, there is not one solitary act of authority ascribed to the Lord's brother, for whom the office and position both of president and prelate are now claimed. He cannot be a bishop in the scriptural sense of the word, for no man has ever shown more clearly than Dr. Lightfoot himself, that bishop in Scripture is only another name for the elder or pastor of a congregation;[1] nor was he a bishop "in the later and special sense of the term," because he is never found performing those functions of ordination, confirmation, or consecration, which are said to be the exclusive right of a modern bishop in a diocese entirely his own.

On a question of this kind, statements outside Scripture are to be estimated as to their value by the time and circumstances in which they were written. Alleged facts, found in authors separated by a wide chasm of time from the events which they mention, are interesting as the opinions of the author; but if unaccompanied by the evidence, they are not entitled to weight, and can rank only as tradition. Bishop Wordsworth does not seem to have the slightest idea of what constitutes historical evidence; for on the question as to whether James was diocesan bishop of Jerusalem in the *first* century, he cites with great confidence Cyril, Epiphanius, Jerome, and Augustine, as if anything they said on the subject could be decisive on a matter of fact that occurred three hundred years before their time. These Fathers are all fair witnesses to anything which came under their own observation, and which they took pains to examine carefully, or which they had the means of knowing from intelligent and unpre-

[1] *Commentary on Philippians*, p. 95.

judiced observers; but owing to their distance from the apostolic age, they are no more witnesses, or capable of giving historical testimony to an event which occurred in the first century, than Dr. Wordsworth himself. Even Eusebius (313–337), who stood nearer to the event than any of the Fathers now named, lived two hundred years too late to be able to give any independent evidence as to the position held by James the Just in Jerusalem prior to the year 62 A.D. To repeat, as Eusebius and others do, what has floated down to them on the wave of tradition, or what they find stated in writers whose works are still extant, adds no weight to the real evidence. Bishop Wordsworth[1] actually quotes the *Clementine Recognitions* and the *Apostolic Constitutions* to sustain his case; but no scholar needs to be told that the former is a forgery, and the latter a spurious compilation of the fourth century.[2] The testimony of a proved impostor in any court of justice does not go for much. A citation in evidence from a literary imposture casts suspicion on the cause in whose support it is used, and is not to be commended, even though employed by a bishop. "All Church history," as one learned writer has it, and "all antiquity," as another finely phrases it, being in favour of James as bishop of Jerusalem, and as such "the earliest bishop of the Christian Church," come simply to mean that James has been so designated by Hegesippus and Clement of Alexandria.

Hegesippus, the oldest uninspired writer who touches the subject, wrote about 180, that is, in round numbers, about a hundred years or more after James, who was martyred in A.D. 62. His work is lost, and is only known by fragments extracted by Eusebius and other writers. His account of James is merely traditional; he knew nothing of the subject from personal knowledge, and he quotes the authority of no preceding writer. The only passages in Hegesippus bearing on the subject of James are the following:—

"James, the Lord's brother, succeeds to the government of

[1] See *Outlines*, p. 63.

[2] See article "Clementine Literature," in Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, and another on the "Apostolical Constitutions," in the *Christian Antiquities*.

the Church in conjunction with the apostles" [*διαδέχεται τὴν ἐκκλησίαν*].[1]

"After James the Just had suffered martyrdom, as had the Lord also, and on the same account, again Simeon, son of Cleophas, descended from the Lord's uncle, is made bishop" [*καθίσταται ἐπίσκοπος*].[2]

Eusebius himself simply repeats Hegesippus, when he states that the Jews slew

"James, who first obtained the episcopal seat at Jerusalem after the ascension of our Saviour."[3]

The two statements of Hegesippus, which Eusebius repeats about a century and a half later, do not prove the point which they are quoted to prove, namely, that James was a diocesan bishop. Assuming that "succeeds to the Church with the apostles" means succeeds *to the government* of the Church with the concurrence of the apostles, still it settles nothing, and adds nothing to what we know from the New Testament. Hegesippus does not decide whether he was an apostle in residence or a diocesan bishop. The chief government of the local Church would naturally fall into the hands of an apostle who was constantly in attendance, while the others were absent on their missionary journeys. The position of presiding among the presbyters, as James either from his apostleship or relationship to the Lord would be called upon to do, would, even if he presided only *primus inter pares*, give him such an authority as Hegesippus, writing about 180, saw entitled a man in his own time to be called a bishop, and by implication he gave James this name, as he gave it directly to Simeon. But there is nothing in it to show what kind of bishop James was. Here is the point where the proof fails.

Clement of Alexandria (190–220) wrote about 140 years after the death of James; and in regard to place and time his statement is only traditional, or historical in only a very slight degree. He probably knew still less of the matter than Hegesippus. Eusebius quotes from him the following:—

"Peter and James and John, after the ascension of the Saviour, did not contend for the honour, but chose James the Just as bishop of Jerusalem."[4]

[1] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 23.
[2] *Ibid.* iv. 22.
[3] *Ibid.* iii. 5.
[4] *Ibid.* ii. 1.

Here again the question mainly turns on what Clement understood by the term *bishop*, which, supposing it to be understood by his readers, he does not think it needful to explain. Perhaps he, as well as Hegesippus, uses the language of his own time,—the latter part of the second century,—when the presiding presbyter had won a recognised position over the other bishops of the congregation, and began to be spoken of as *the* bishop, that is, pastor of the Church. A hundred years before, in the time of Clement of Rome, all the presbyters of the congregation were bishops; now the presbyter who constantly presides is *the* bishop, and those who once were his equals have accepted the position of presbyters only. James, owing to his apostolic office, occupied among the elders of the Church a position of pre-eminence, a little earlier than it was gained by the presiding elder in other Churches; he was, in fact, what Dr. Lightfoot calls him, "the resident apostle or pre-elder of the mother Church;"[1] and it is simply on this ground, so easily intelligible in his circumstances, that the position is now claimed for him of being a "diocesan bishop." Clement of Alexandria speaks in the language of his own age; but his meaning clearly is that James was chief pastor of the Church at Jerusalem, which his apostolic office entitled him to be in any Christian assembly; that he took charge of it as its chief presbyter or bishop, and that he occupied that position with the consent of his brethren. Nobody can have the slightest doubt that all this is true; but it does not prove him to be "a bishop in the later and more special sense of the term," so long as no proof is offered that he exercised jurisdiction over a diocese containing more Churches than one, that he retained in his hand the exclusive right of ordination, and that the presbyters throughout the diocese confirmed and consecrated in no case without his permission.

Some Episcopalian writers have as little confidence in this argument as we have ourselves. Thus Mr. Litton says:—

"That St. James, the brother of our Lord, exercised some kind of presidency, and that a permanent one, in the Church of Jerusalem, is manifest from the way in which he is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles; but what the nature of it was, and whether official or simply personal, is not told us."[2]

[1] *Galatians*, p. 255. [2] *On the Church*, p. 424.

But if the argument from the case of James fail, on what other in the Bible can Prelacy build with confidence? Bishop Lightfoot says that "James alone, within the period compassed by the apostolic writings, can claim to be regarded as a bishop in the later and more special sense of the term." We think we have proved that this claim has no solid foundation on which to rest.

CHAPTER IV.—PRELACY.

TIMOTHY AND TITUS.

THE argument for the prelatic system derived from what is told in Scripture regarding Timothy and Titus, is thus stated by Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, Bishop of Lincoln:—

"They were not *apostles;* not being of directly divine appointment, as all the apostles, including St. Matthias, St. Paul, and St. Barnabas, were, they were never so called; and they were not mere presbyters, for they are commanded by St. Paul to ordain, to charge, to rebuke preachers, and to superintend the doctrine and conduct of both presbyters and deacons, and this with all authority; but *par in parem non habet imperium.*"[1]

The Bishop of Lincoln deserves credit for being so very modest in the position that he claims for Timothy as compared with Chrysostom, who, according to Bingham, designates him as "bishop of the universe."[2]

Dr. Wordsworth of St. Andrews speaks of Paul, "towards the close of his career, devolving his episcopal powers on Timothy at Ephesus, and upon Titus at Crete," and says that the Churches in both places were "constituted with a prelatical ministry."[3]

That some attach much importance to the position of these two companions of Paul at Ephesus and Crete is evident also from the remark of Mr. Litton, who says:—

"These two cases are those upon which the scriptural evidence for Episcopacy mainly rests; for to the others which have been adduced, so much uncertainty confessedly attaches, that but little stress can be laid upon them."[4]

This statement from a writer in every way so candid and

[1] *Theoph. Anglicanus*, i. 10, p. 25.
[2] *Antiquities*, ii. 5. 1.
[3] *Outlines*, pp. 71, 72.
[4] *On the Church of Christ*, p. 424.

evangelical as Mr. Litton is quite sufficient of itself to call attention to the argument.

TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE.

The following passages of Scripture are those usually quoted in favour of the notion that Timothy and Titus were diocesan bishops:—

As I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus when I was going into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine.—1 Tim. i. 3.

I exhort, therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men.—1 Tim. ii. 1.

I permit not a woman to teach.—1 Tim. ii. 12.

If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work; the bishop therefore must be without reproach.—1 Tim. iii. 1, 2.

These things command and teach.—1 Tim. iv. 11.

Rebuke not an elder [πρεσβυτέρῳ], but exhort him as a father.—1 Tim. v. 1.

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and teaching.—1 Tim. v. 17.

Against an elder [πρεσβυτέρου] receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses.—1 Tim. v. 19.

Lay hands hastily on no man, neither be partakers of other men's sins.—1 Tim. v. 22.

The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.—2 Tim. ii. 2.

Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine.—2 Tim. iv. 2.

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city as I gave thee charge.—Titus i. 5.

Talkers and deceivers . . . whose mouths must be stopped.—Titus i. 11.

Speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine, that aged men be temperate.—Titus ii. 1.

These things speak, and exhort and reprove with all authority.—Titus ii. 15.

A man that is heretical after a first and second admonition, refuse.—Titus iii. 10.

These passages, Archbishop Potter thinks, are full authority for saying that Timothy

"Was empowered to command and teach those under his care, to make rules for the orderly celebration of divine worship, to hinder women from speaking in the public assemblies, to see that the teachers taught no doctrine but what they received from our Lord and His apostles, to commit the doctrine of the gospel to faithful men who should be able to teach others also, and to ordain some of those whom he found duly qualified to be bishops and deacons; and he was to judge of men's abilities and fitness for these offices, whence he is exhorted to 'lay hands suddenly on no man,' which would have been unreasonable if he had not had power to reject the unworthy. Further, he was authorized to take care that a competent maintenance should be provided, and all due honour paid to the Church officers, to exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and to take cognizance of accusations, not only against private Christians, but even against the elders; though in this latter case, where the Church's honour was more highly concerned, he was to proceed with more caution."

In like manner, in regard to Titus, Potter says:—

"By virtue of his appointment he was empowered to teach all degrees of men, and to exhort and rebuke them with authority; to take cognizance of heretics, and to reject from his own and the Church's communion such of them as did not repent upon the second admonition; to set in order what St. Paul had left wanting; lastly, to ordain those whom he should approve to be bishops and elders."[1]

Most readers, we think, will, on careful examination of the scriptural passages, conclude with us that the foundation is too narrow to bear this superstructure, and that no small portion of the superstructure rests on no solid foundation whatever.

Upon this argument we observe:—

1. That something very desirable to be known, is not stated by most of those who use the case of Timothy and Titus in support of the prelatic system. They supply no dates; they inform us neither as to the date of his appointment nor the date of his retirement. Timothy could not have been bishop

[1] *Discourse on Church Government*, chap. iv. pp. 93–95.

of Ephesus on the day when Paul sent for the elders of that Church, lectured them on their official duties, and called them bishops in Timothy's presence (Acts xx.). Nor could he have been bishop when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians, for he never mentions his name; nor was he bishop when John wrote to the angel of the Church of Ephesus in the name of the Master: "I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love." So that if Timothy held the position, it must have been during that brief point of time when Paul addressed to him those two pastoral Epistles which go by his name. There is no evidence that the dignity was permanent.

2. There was something peculiar in the case of Ephesus. During the imprisonment and long absence of Paul, the Church had fallen into some disorder. When addressing the elders on his last visit, he had intimated that after his departure "grievous wolves" would enter in among them, not sparing the flock (Acts xx. 29). Ten years had since elapsed; and in the moving population of a commercial city, ten years work changes. Possibly the former elders were either removed or dead, and men of less knowledge and experience occupied their place. The apostle, contrary to the fears he had once expressed, that "he would see their face no more," was spared to visit the Christians of Ephesus again; and, if other pressing duties had permitted, would gladly have stayed with them longer. When at last he departed for Macedonia, Timothy, at his entreaty, remained behind at Ephesus to counteract the influence of false teachers, and to do on his behalf what he would have done himself, had he been able to remain. No man clothed with apostolic power had been among them for a long time. The grievous wolves had wasted the Church, and had done their cruel work too well. The evils prevailing were out of the ordinary course: the remedy was no less so. Timothy received the powers necessary to correct the evil; but the authority thus bestowed was not that of the presbytery, but of the apostle by whom he was commissioned. To Titus similar authority was given in another quarter. The religious condition of Crete at the time is not known beyond this, that there too the "wolf" had made his appearance; the organization of the Churches was

incomplete, and elders were needed for their instruction and government. Titus accordingly was commissioned "to set in order the things that were wanting, and to appoint elders in every city." Timothy and Titus were both evangelists—officers who, in rank, came next to the apostles and prophets; now in the apostle's room, they were invested with special authority for a special occasion. The powers entrusted to them were powers that the apostle exercised every day; the peculiarity of the present case is that these men, his friends and fellow-labourers, were empowered by him to act in his stead.

3. Although their intervention was strengthened by their possession of apostolic powers, it does not appear either that these men did anything, or were commissioned to do anything, that is not quite within the province of any presbytery which knows its duty and is willing to do it. The difference is that the presbyters act in conjunction as one body; Timothy and Titus had authority from the apostle each to act by himself. Yet there is nothing in any of these Epistles which requires us to believe, that either of them superseded the presbytery and acted independently of it. The exercise of arbitrary power, except where it is necessary, is always uncongenial to a spiritual mind. Where it was possible so to do, the evangelists took into counsel, we may be sure, the existing eldership, and acted in conjunction with them. Yet, in all, neither of them performed a solitary act, to which a presbyter armed with apostolic powers, or in conjunction with other presbyters, is not fully equal.

The duties to which Timothy and Titus were appointed, were to instruct the Churches, to maintain order, to silence false teachers, to appoint elders, and to exercise discipline. If they discharged any other duties not fairly included in those now mentioned, we cannot find them in the passages quoted to prove that they were diocesan bishops. Now, every one of these duties is strictly within the right of the ordinary pastors of the Church, either acting singly or associated in presbytery. To command, to teach, to pray for different classes of men, to preach the word, and to exhort, constitute a kind of work with which every minister of Christ is perfectly familiar. Where the civil power does not stand at

his back, the prelate has no means of stopping the mouth of the false teacher and of rejecting the heretic, that is not open to the presbytery. Jurisdiction is supposed to be implied in the words, "receive not an accusation;" and ordination in the words, "lay hands hastily on no man;" but both jurisdiction and ordination are parts of that rule, which by divine right belongs to presbyters (1 Tim. v. 17), and which the presbyters of that age were accustomed to exercise (Acts xiii. 3; 1 Tim. iv. 14). The words in Titus i. 5, "appoint elders" [καταστήσης πρεσβυτέρους], denote result, not ordination, or the outward means by which that result was obtained. The duties enjoined in these verses, are, of course, outside the power of presbyters either in the Roman or Anglican Churches, from whom the power of ordination and jurisdiction has been taken away in order to add dignity to the prelate. But these duties the pastors of all Presbyterian Churches are familiar with, every day of their lives; associated together as a presbytery, they ordain elders; they receive accusations against delinquent presbyters; they deal with false teachers when they arise among them; they command, they rebuke, they exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. The only difference is, that in virtue of their apostolic commission, Timothy and Titus, each in his own sphere, performed alone, acts which, in ordinary circumstances, presbyters can perform only in their associated capacity. That, and that only, is the peculiarity of their position. Each of them, in virtue of his commission, could act alone if necessary. But it is not necessary to suppose that in every case they did act alone. Christianity had not died out either in Ephesus or in Crete. The Church, though scattered and weakened by the "grievous wolves," was not extinct. If the circumstances allowed of it, each of the evangelists would be joined in his action by such of the presbyters as survived and remained faithful. Good men, whether in office or out of it, would cordially co-operate with Timothy and Titus, and instead of resenting, as carnal unspiritual men would be sure to do, any intervention from without, they would be grateful to the apostle for sending them such valuable aid and encouragement. Ordination by a plurality of Church officers is the ordinary scriptural practice; but where this is impossible or inconvenient,

ordination by a single Church officer is amply justified, as in this case by the commission of an apostle or by the obvious necessities of the case.

4. Scripture does not assign any name to the office whose duties were discharged by Timothy at Ephesus, and by Titus at Crete. Dr. Wordsworth of St. Andrews makes Titus to be a modern bishop, because he was directed to appoint presbyters;[1] and Ussher raises him to the dignity of an archbishop, because the elders whom he appointed were scriptural bishops, as indeed all true elders are. Most Anglican and Romish writers are convinced that they were prelates of some sort, although they forget to tell the time and place of their consecration, or who took part in the ceremony. If so, it is very remarkable that the office which they filled at Ephesus and Crete is never named in the word of God. Neither of the two is called on any occasion apostle, prophet, pastor, prelate, elder, or presbyter. To mitigate the force of this unwelcome fact, we are reminded that "the seven" are not called deacons in Acts vi.; but to this we reply, that those who minister to the poor receive the name deacons in other parts of the New Testament, and that humble Church officers, of whom there were seven in a single congregation, are not so conspicuous nor so deserving of distinctive titles as men for whom the claim is now made, that the one was Archbishop of Ephesus and the other Bishop of Crete. The early Christians were not indeed known by the name *Christians* till they came to Antioch (Acts xi. 26); but previously they were called by other names,—disciples, believers, brethren,—names which, in the infancy of the Church, before its members came to mix with the pagan world, made any more distinctive name unnecessary. But in all the New Testament what distinctive name is given to a man inferior to apostles and prophets, but superior to evangelists, pastors, and teachers—the ordinary instructors of the congregation, and whose functions are thus described by one who believes in him: "The single president of a diocese, who came in the room of the apostles, having presbyters, deacons, and laity under him, and possessing exclusive powers of ordination, and primarily of confirmation, with primary

[1] *Outlines*, p. 51.

authority in the administration of the sacraments and of discipline"? For such a dignitary no name is to be found in Scripture. Might the reason not be, that the dignitary in question did not then exist?

Timothy was an evangelist, as we infer from the various glimpses of his life given in the New Testament, apart altogether from his special mission to Ephesus, and the exhortation —"Do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. iv. 5). This exhortation, Dr. Wordsworth of St. Andrews thinks, would be "impertinent," provided Timothy was already an evangelist and nothing more; to tell him to do the work of his own office, he thinks would be "almost tantamount to an affront."[1] If this reasoning is sound, these Pastoral Epistles are full of affronts. If Timothy was a diocesan bishop, it was very like an affront when Paul exhorted him to tarry in his see (1 Tim. i. 3), from which he was evidently fond of wandering away. It might be affirmed, on the same mode of reasoning, that he was not a preacher of the gospel, for the apostle solemnly charges him to "preach the word" (2 Tim. iv. 2); and to speak thus to one who was already a preacher of the word was "almost tantamount" to another affront. To call on him to suffer hardship as a "good soldier" (2 Tim. ii. 3), and a "workman that needeth not to be ashamed" (ver. 15), is something like another affront; it would imply, on Dr. Wordsworth's reasoning, that Timothy was not already these things that he was exhorted to be. In none of these exhortations can we see the impertinence nor acknowledge the affront; nor would Dr. Wordsworth in our circumstances. Had Paul said to Timothy—"Do the work of a prelate," the Bishop of St. Andrews would close his argument in triumph, and in view of these decisive words would pronounce any further reasoning on the subject needless. But, strange to say, he infers from the words: "Do the work of an evangelist," that Timothy was not an evangelist! Could prejudice itself go farther?

The meaning of the apostle's exhortation is clear. While Timothy, in restoring the order of the Church, was to act with all the authority and vigour of an apostle, he was not to neglect the ordinary duty which belonged to him as an evangelist and minister of Christ, but to preach the gospel to all.

[1] *Outlines*, p. 53.

Ephesus, in which Paul had on one occasion resided for a considerable time, was not what could be strictly called a new region; but there, as in most other great cities, there were heathen enough, among whom any man fitted to do the work of an evangelist could find abundance of field. The assumption lying at the basis of the well-known legend of the seven sleepers would have had no foundation, if, even so late as the Decian persecution (250 A.D.),—nearly two centuries after Timothy,—Ephesus had not been in the main a pagan city. Timothy, notwithstanding the temporary commission given him by the apostle to Ephesus, was an evangelist, as is proved by the exhortation, "Do the work of an evangelist." That he and Titus are designated bishops by the Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries, arises from two causes: first, the desire to find scriptural foundation for diocesan bishops after they had grown up to be an established institution in the Church; and second, that Timothy and Titus appointed elders and laid on hands—work which, however different the practice of presbyters associated together in the first century, was in the fourth and fifth reserved for the prelate alone.

5. Over and above their ordinary office of evangelists, Timothy and Titus were for this special occasion apostolic delegates.[1] Of the delegate, we accept as it stands Bishop Lightfoot's definition: "A link between the apostle whose superintendence was occasional and general, and the bishop who exercised a permanent supervision over an individual congregation."[2] Both of them were usually employed in preaching from place to place; but on this occasion each evangelist had apostolic authority superadded for the discharge of a special duty in a special locality.[3] When that special duty is completed at Ephesus, Timothy returns to his ordinary work elsewhere. His office, peculiar to one place for a time, could not have been permanent; there is no evidence that it previously existed, and no provision is made for its continuance. One writer calls Timothy and Titus "superintendents."

[1] The reasons for appointing such on this occasion are clearly explained by Litton, p. 421.

[2] *Philippians*, p. 197.

[3] The writer of *Tracts for the Times*, No. 7, accepts the principle of delegation, maintaining that priests and deacons are only delegates of the bishop—in fact, that the whole Episcopal system as known to us is founded on delegation.

That is, in the Pastoral Epistles, we have, *first*, the apostle who commissions; *second*, the *superintendent* who receives the commission; *third*, the elders whom the superintendent appoints; and *fourth*, the deacons named in the third chapter of the first Epistle. Apostles, superintendents, elders, deacons —very good! But what in that case comes of the *three*-fold ministry?

6. The mission of Timothy and Titus, name them as we may, was only temporary at Ephesus and Crete. When things were set in order, when the false teachers were checked, and the Churches reorganized, no more was left to be done in those regions that could not as well be done by others. Shortly afterwards, Timothy was sent for by the apostle to join him at Rome (2 Tim. iv. 9): and it is mentioned in the same Epistle (iv. 10) that Titus, instead of remaining in his diocese, as perhaps he might have been persuaded to do if he had been a prelate, had gone to Dalmatia. The whole circumstances of the case leave the impression, that both were sent by the apostle upon a special mission, and that when the duties of the mission were fulfilled, each went to some other place where his presence was more needed. Since Dr. Lightfoot has been promoted to the See of Durham he writes in language more episcopally orthodox, and now speaks of "the *moveable episcopate* exercised by Timothy in Ephesus and Titus in Crete;"[1] but in his earlier and better days, when he wrote the *Essay on the Christian Ministry*, he could write more correctly thus:—

"It is the conception of a later age which represents Timothy as bishop of Ephesus and Titus as bishop of Crete. St. Paul's own language implies that the position which they held was temporary. In both cases their term of office was drawing to a close as the apostle writes."[2]

Other theologians of the Anglican communion, some of them of high repute, are of the same opinion. In particular, Dean Stanley, whose views of ecclesiastical polity fortunately were not affected by promotion, does not think it "necessary to prove at any length the wholly temporary character of the

[1] Lightfoot's *Ignatius*, vol. i. p. 377.

[2] *Comment. on Philippians*, p. 197. He refers in proof of his statement to 1 Tim. i. 3, iii. 14, 15; 2 Tim. iv. 9, 10, 21; Titus i. 5, iii. 12, 14.

office, *if it may be called an office*, which Timotheus and Titus held respectively at Ephesus and Crete, of whom the first was governor of the Church in Paul's absence, and left it altogether before Paul's death; and the second was to leave the island that very winter."[1]

7. The use which Episcopalian writers make of the case of Timothy and Titus is to show that "imparity of ministers is not only allowable but scriptural, and that according to the mind of St. Paul the general superintendence or government of an ecclesiastical district, including Churches with their deacons, is best committed to a single person."[2] To us who believe that in the Church of the first century there were apostles and evangelists as well as bishops and deacons, there is not much need to prove that imparity of ministers, taking the word in a general sense, is scriptural, and the case of Ephesus and Crete shows that there are occasions when for a time more than ordinary power may be wisely delegated to a single man. But this is the exception, not the rule; and to delegate extraordinary power to one man in every district is to act, not on the rule, but on the exception, and it is to convert a temporary expedient into a permanent law. We cannot fairly conclude that an expedient called for by the state of the Churches in Ephesus and Crete at that time was best for them permanently, and that an arrangement suited to the two places under peculiar circumstances must suit the Churches of every place under all circumstances. If that were the case, we cannot understand why the apostle did not set up a similar institution in all other Churches, and why he did not impose it permanently even on Ephesus and Crete. Nobody has yet shown good cause why a local and temporary arrangement should be made a general rule to be observed by all Christians; nor why a new officer should be permanently interposed between the apostles and evangelists who laboured for the evangelization of the world, and the bishops and deacons who directed the spiritual and temporal affairs of the local Church.

8. The tone, especially of the Epistles to Timothy, is not that in which an apostle would address a man of mature age

[1] Stanley's *Sermons on the Apostolic Age*, pp. 46, 47.
[2] Litton's *Church of Christ*, p. 426.

about to assume the government of a large district containing many congregations and pastors. On the contrary, Timothy is still a young man (1 Tim. iv. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 22), and the apostle speaks to him in the tender terms in which a father would speak to an inexperienced son, anxious for his spiritual advancement in grace and knowledge (1 Tim. iv. 13–16, vi. 11–14, 20; 2 Tim. ii. 1–13), as well as giving him full directions to guide him in his action to others (1 Tim. i. 4–7, ii., iii. 1–13). He writes lest he himself should not be able to return to Ephesus so soon as he could wish (1 Tim. iii. 15); though why he should return at all, on the supposition that Ephesus is a diocese permanently handed over into the hands of Timothy as prelate, does not appear. His exhortations are of a kind, not bearing so much on his dealings with the Churches and pastors of an extensive district, as upon the individual members of a local Church—old men, young men, old women, young women, widows (1 Tim. v. 16)—persons of a class with whom a prelate personally has little to do, but usually commits to the care of his subordinates. Teaching and ruling, including rebuke, reproof, reception of accusations, and silencing false teachers, are indeed duties that a prelate has to perform occasionally; but all these things in other parts of the divine word are the peculiar duties of the elders and pastors of congregations. When "double honour" is enjoined, it is not sought for Timothy, but for the teaching and ruling elders of the Church (1 Tim. v. 17). Tychicus is now sent a second time to Ephesus (Eph. vi. 21, 22)—this time to replace Timothy (2 Tim. iv. 9, 12). Timothy is to rejoin Paul before winter, and when he comes he is to bring with him the cloke and books and parchments (2 Tim. iv. 13, 24) which the apostle left at Troas, a rather humble duty for a great dignitary—the Archbishop of Ephesus. In all this there is no distinctive mark that we can discover of a diocesan bishop.

The Epistle to Titus is much shorter, and not written in terms so tender and touching as the letters to Timothy. It has this, however, in common with them, that it mixes personal advice and cautions with directions to guide in the instruction and government of others. But if Titus was a prelate, non-residence in that age must have been a virtue.

He also is gone from his diocese (2 Tim. iv. 10), having been previously sent for to Nicopolis (Titus iii. 12), and another is sent to take his place. There is an attention to individuals inculcated upon him (Titus iii. 13), which could scarcely be expected from the spiritual ruler of a hundred cities.

9. Dr. Wordsworth of St. Andrews, distrusting, as he has good reason, the argument from Scripture, appeals to history in support of his belief that Timothy and Titus were diocesans. He states that he could "produce *twenty* distinct testimonies from ancient writers or documents to this effect." [1] But none of these witnesses are contemporaries. He admits that none of them is "earlier than the latter part of the *third* century," which happens to be some two centuries or so too late for his purpose. One hundred and twenty such testimonies, not to say "twenty," would not weigh the weight of a feather with any man who knows what historical evidence really is. Statements of persons who live two hundred years away from the events which they record, and who could have known nothing personally about the matter, and who make no mention of the source from which they derived their intelligence, are not witnesses, and are not qualified to give evidence; their statements are tradition or opinion, not testimony. So little does Dr. Wordsworth know of the nature of historical evidence, or what constitutes its strength or its weakness, that he actually quotes the Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, held in 451 A.D., to *prove* that Timothy was bishop of that city in the first century of our era. A matter of some four hundred years intervening between the alleged event and the witness, seems as nothing to him. The Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451 he thinks is competent to bear witness to an alleged fact, which, if it occurred at all, must have occurred between 60 and 68 A.D., and he adds complacently that "the evidence which it affords is of such a kind that it is scarcely possible to conceive any more satisfactory or more complete!" [2] The good bishop wonders that Dr. Lightfoot takes no notice of this *evidence*. On the contrary, if he had taken notice of it, *that* would have been the wonder indeed.

[1] *Outlines*, p. 53.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 54–56.

THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH.

The epithet "angel of the Church," which repeatedly occurs in the early chapters of the Revelation, supplies another argument to Episcopalian writers. The expression, they remind us, is a title of eminence; the letter addressed to the "angel" is addressed to an individual; and this individual is either praised or blamed, in fact is held responsible for the moral condition of the Church with which his name is connected. The inference which they draw is, that the "angel" must be a prelate, for had the Asiatic Churches been Presbyterian no individual would have been responsible, and the remonstrance would have been addressed to the presbytery. The conclusion as drawn by the Bishop of St. Andrews is rather imposing, considering the rather narrow basis of fact on which it rests:—

"In these chapters of the Apocalypse," says Dr. Wordsworth, "we see before the departure of the last apostle the diocesan and prelatical system fully developed, not only with its 'angel,' having presbyters and deacons under him, but with St. John himself as its archbishop or metropolitan." [1]

This we understand to mean that Dr. Wordsworth learns from the Apocalypse, that so early as the last decade of the first century there were in a small corner of the Lesser Asia seven diocesan bishops here called "angels;" each of these bishops had a diocese; and the Apostle John was an archbishop presiding over the seven. To this we reply:—

1. The name ἄγγελος, translated *angel*, perhaps we ought to say, left untranslated, means *a messenger*. It is so rendered in Mark i. 2, where it is applied to John the Baptist—"the messenger" sent to prepare the way for Christ; and in a literal sense it is used in Jas. ii. 25 in reference to the spies sent out by Joshua: Rahab "received the messengers [τοὺς ἀγγέλους], and sent them out another way." Had it been translated *messengers* in the Apocalypse, as it is everywhere else translated when applied to human beings, the word would have been so unworthy of high episcopal office, that possibly we might never have heard of the present argument. There is some hing grand in the name angel, but

[1] *Outlines*, p. 29.

a prelate would have no ambition to be regarded as the mere *messenger* of the Church. The angel of the Apocalypse is not a messenger from heaven, as the English word angel invariably suggests; for, as Dr. Lightfoot properly observes—"a messenger of God would hardly be called the angel of the Church over which he presides;" and we may add, it would be rather a roundabout way of communication for Him who walks among the golden candlesticks, to employ the seer of Patmos to write in His name a letter to each of seven of his own personal attendants. A messenger of God from heaven is an angel in the proper sense of that word; but a "messenger of the Church," however it may describe the pastor who belongs to the Church, and who delivers to it the message of salvation, is not the most appropriate name either for a dignified prelate or a celestial visitor. The name "angel" is honourable for its associations; but in its literal sense of *messenger* it expresses neither pre-eminence nor oversight. If the angel of the Church possessed any dignity of position, that can only be learned from the circumstances, not from the word ἄγγελος, which means a *messenger* and no more.

2. It is by no means certain whether "the messenger of the Church" is an individual member employed in this public capacity, or the most prominent of the Church officers, or the Church itself personified and addressed as a single person. All these opinions have been expressed and sustained by more or less plausible reasons; nor is there anything in the inspired narrative to enable us to decide among them with confidence. The "angel" is most frequently addressed as an individual; he is praised, when the moral condition of the Church is as it ought to be; he is blamed, when sin predominates and remains unchecked. But though the letter in each case is addressed to one person, the writer seems occasionally to be speaking to more; thus in the Epistle to Smyrna—"Behold, the devil is about to cast *some of you* into prison;" and in that to Pergamum he speaks of "Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed *among you*." These facts do not, we admit, throw much light upon the matter; they only furnish field for conjecture when nothing can with certainty be known. The most reasonable view seems to be that the angel is the presiding presbyter, or as we say, pastor of the Church,

presiding at public worship, and in the presbytery *primus inter pares*. There is no evidence that at this early stage he had any supremacy in jurisdiction, or in ordination, or in anything over his co-presbyters. He was simply *primus* among those elders charged with the feeding of the flock, and, about a hundred years after, he came to be spoken of as *the* bishop or pastor of the congregation. Standing thus at the head of the presbytery or eldership of the congregation, he is justly held responsible for what the Church does by the advice or with the connivance of himself and his colleagues. He is addressed as in some degree representing the Church officers and Church members, among whom he presides as pastor.

This is no new opinion. It was expressed long ago by Hilary the deacon, a writer of the fourth century:—

"They who announce the word of God to the people are not unfitly called *angels*, that is, messengers" (*nuntii*).[1]

In an ancient exposition of the Apocalypse, ascribed to Augustine, and published among his works, the writer says:—

"Seeing that *angel* is translated *messenger*, whosoever, whether bishop, presbyter, or layman, speaks often of God, and proclaims the way to eternal life, is deservedly called an angel of God."[2]

We quote these words, not, of course, to prove the truth of our interpretation, but simply to show that we do not put upon "the *angel*" a forced interpretation when we understand it to mean the minister of the congregation—the first of the elders or presbytery who announces the word of God to the people. He is the messenger of God in one point of view, because the message that he carries to men is the message of God; and he is the messenger of the Church in another point of view, because he belongs to the Church of which he is the pastor. He is at once the minister of Christ and the minister of the Church for Christ's sake. We say of the angel what Dr. Wordsworth is obliged to admit of *episcopus* (bishop), that it may "refer to the pastoral charge of a congregation, and to the presbyter who is to occupy such charge."[3]

3. What is the *Church* over which the angel presides?

[1] In Migne, *Pat. Latina*, vol. xvii. c. 776.
[2] *Patrologia*, vol. xxxv. c. 2420.
[3] *Outlines*, p. 50.

Certainly not the edifice; the word is never so applied throughout the apostolic age. Nor is it what Haddan calls "a diocesan Church," that is, an aggregate of Churches and pastors presided over permanently by one exalted Church officer afterwards known as a prelate; for it is not in proof that any such aggregate existed in the apostolic age in any country of the world, nor is the word ever used in that sense in the New Testament. Nor is it the communion of saints; for although that be a scriptural use of the word, the Church spoken of in the passage under discussion is in each case limited to one well-known locality of Asia Minor,[1] and in some instances seems to include in its membership persons who are anything but saints. The Church is the congregation of Christian people statedly meeting for worship in each of the cities named. Each Church it was the practice of the apostles to put in charge of a body of presbyters, familiarly known as the presbytery; and he who presides at meetings of these presbyters or in public worship, is in the Apocalypse—written towards the end of the first century—called the angel of the Church: one hundred years later the same man would have been called the bishop; now he is called the pastor or the minister. But he could not have been a bishop in the sense of a diocesan, because there is no evidence that any of these angels presided, as prelates do, over more Churches than one. Had they been bishops of such an order as now is, all the seven Churches of Asia, consisting of a handful of poor Christians thinly sprinkled among a pagan population, would not have been enough to make a respectable diocese for any one of them.

4. That the "angel of the Church" could not have been a prelate, is proved clearly by the fact that in none of the Epistles is there any allusion to what is usually understood to be the peculiar work of prelates; all the references are to congregational and pastoral life.

Every one who has made a small acquaintance even with the episcopal action of the fourth or fifth centuries, or who has read the *Epistles* of Cyprian written in the third, is aware how largely directions to the inferior clergy enter into the

[1] Ephesus, Smyrna, Sardis, and Philadelphia are all *in* the province of Lydia; Pergamum, Thyatira, and Laodicea are *near the borders* of that province.

everyday work and correspondence of the prelate. But in the Epistles addressed to the angels there is no reference to the diocesan clergy, nor to strictness or laxity in the supervision of clergy. There is no reference to candidates for holy orders, nor even to the holy orders that the prelate alone is supposed to confer, to the confirmation which he conducts, nor to the consecration of virgins or of Churches, of oil or of water, of bells or of cemeteries. Archbishop Trench, speaking of the angel, asks—"What can he be but a bishop? A bishop, too, *with the prerogatives which we ascribe to him.*" But the archbishop fails to furnish proof of the "prerogatives," and that is the very thing which we desire to see supplied. How many Churches and clergymen had the Bishop of Philadelphia under his control? What was the extent of the See of Pergamum? How many ordinations were performed annually by the Bishop of Ephesus? Did the Prelate of Thyatira confirm once in two years or three? Did the Bishop of Sardis consecrate widows and virgins, graveyards and Churches? We cannot find in any of the letters the slightest proof that the angel of the Churches exercised any of these prerogatives, or troubled himself about such matters.

On the contrary, the allusions in the letters are not to episcopal supervision of the clergy and of Churches, but to pastoral work, such as that which enters into the experience of every pastor in dealing with his flock. The things described are what ministers every day encounter among the people of their charge—spiritual declension, sufferings, persecution, toleration of sin, lukewarmness, deadness, ignorance, self-deception. The virtues praised are not those which a bishop is most likely to notice among the clergy of his diocese, but which a minister every day discovers in unexpected places among the humble people of his charge—trials, patience, poverty, fidelity to principle, works of faith and love, courage, and stedfastness under temptation. We are far from saying that such sins and such virtues are entirely unknown among the clergy; but certainly they are more general and better known among the members of the flock. Still further, the duties urged upon the "angels" themselves —repentance and watchfulness—are duties which some pre-

lates would regard as "almost tantamount to an affront" if urged upon them even by their "archbishop and metropolitan" —the titles with which, as trinkets of honour, Dr. Wordsworth adorns the Apostle John. The menaces also are of a quality which, coming from a superior, would try the good nature and Christian temper of an angel, even if that angel were Bishop of St. Andrews. Over the head of these Asian angels is held out the threat to extinguish the candle light of Ephesus, to punish him of Thyatira for conniving at adultery, and to spue him of Laodicea out of the mouth. The humble pastor of a single congregation, accustomed every day to the contradiction of sinners, might be able to listen to such language with humility and respect; but a prelate accustomed daily to so much admiration would need more than a common temper in order to take such rough words meekly.

5. Bishop Lightfoot cannot see in "the angel" of the Apocalypse a "human officer" of any kind; but thinks him to be the celestial guardian or personification of the spirit of the Church. We do not coincide in that opinion. The Revelation is indeed a highly symbolical book, but it does not follow that there is a symbol in everything, and that no part of it is to be understood in a literal or figurative way. The second and third chapters deal with actual cities and Churches known at the time, and read to us like a plain historical narrative, not to be converted at our pleasure into a rhetorical or symbolic representation. Nor can we see that the supposed celestial guardian of a Church can or ought to be made responsible for the faults of its officers and members. Even Dr. Lightfoot cannot see in the "angel" a diocesan bishop. "Neither," says he, "does the name angel itself suggest such an explanation, nor is the view in keeping with the highly figurative style of this wonderful book."[1]

For the reasons thus stated, we cannot agree with Bishop Wordsworth in regarding "the Churches of Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea as all severally constituted with a prelatical ministry," or fall in with his extravagant opinion that the Apostle John acted "as an archor metropolitical-bishop at the direction of Christ Himself."[2] His remark suggests the grave question whether, if an apostle

[1] *Comment. on Philippians*, p. 197. [2] *Outlines*, p. 72.

by Christ's direction writes a letter to a bishop, does that fact prove the apostle to be an archbishop? And would not the same argument extended a little farther prove Christ Himself to be a patriarch or cardinal? When Dr. Wordsworth sits down to find in the Scriptures authority for his order, no man is more easily satisfied with proof; on almost every page of the New Testament he finds diocesan bishops and archbishops at work; but few can see them there except himself. On the other hand, for some of the simplest facts of New Testament Church polity he can find no evidence whatever. How wonderful the capacity of the human mind to believe what it wishes to be true!

It is somewhat remarkable, that the Apostle John in all his writings never makes use of the word "bishop" on any occasion. Though he must in the course of his long life have appointed many bishops in the New Testament, and proper, sense of that word, and although we have it, but only on the authority of Dr. Wordsworth, that he himself was an archbishop and metropolitan, he never applies the word to any individual whatever. Official dignity did not bulk so largely to his eye as it does to the prelate of St. Andrews. John modestly calls himself an "elder," but never a bishop. Once, indeed, in ardent youth he had entertained the ambition of a seat of honour in the coming kingdom; but since that time he has learned something, and now knows that the greatest in the kingdom of heaven is the servant of all.

In proof that the argument for Prelacy founded on the "angels" does not appear so conclusive to all Episcopalians as it does to Dr. Wordsworth and other writers of minor name, we append two statements. One of these is from Mr. Litton, who says:—

"As regards the Apocalyptic angels, the character of the book in general, and the evidently metaphorical titles which they bear, prevent us from drawing any certain conclusion concerning them."[1]

The late Dean Stanley also denies

"That any ecclesiastical institution can be deduced from any mention of the angels of the seven Churches, in the total absence of any proof for such an application of the word in the apostolic

[1] *Church of Christ*, p. 424.

age, and against the uniform use of it in all other parts of the Apocalypse in its usual sense of a heavenly messenger."

INCONSISTENCY OF THE PRELATIC ARGUMENT.

We can easily understand how a man believing the episcopal system to be scriptural and right, may lay much stress on any one of the points which we have now examined. Jeremy Taylor rests on the case of the seventy disciples as on a "rock;" Bishop Lightfoot acknowledges the position of James at Jerusalem as the only foundation in Scripture for a prelate; while Mr. Litton rests entirely on Timothy and Titus. But it is difficult to imagine how any candid writer can, like Bishop Wordsworth of St. Andrews, attach importance to them all; for it is manifest that they are inconsistent with each other. If any one of them is a true and sound argument, it is sufficient in itself to nullify nearly all the others. Dr. Lightfoot and Mr. Litton, by leaning on one of these arguments only, practically admit this. Yet it is not uncommon for the common herd of controversialists to set forth all these arguments in order, apparently conscious of no inconsistency in their position, and hoping, perhaps, that the weakness of one will be fortified by the strength of another. But the fact is, none of them has any strength to spare; and if any one of them is a sound argument, it weakens or nullifies the rest.

An advocate of the divine right of the prelatic system, when asked to produce from the New Testament a specimen of a prelate, will not unfrequently point to the Lord Jesus during His earthly life, then to the twelve apostles, next to James at Jerusalem, then to Timothy and Titus, and finally to the angel of the Church. But he allows it to escape his observation that all these were not of the same order, and could not fill the same office. If any one of these was a prelate, that necessarily excludes the rest, seeing that their rank, in nearly every one of the cases, was different from that of the others. If Christ was a prelate, that necessarily excludes the apostles, for they were infinitely lower than He. If all the apostles were bishops, we do not see the consistency of making it appear that James the Just, who, though an apostle, was not superior to Peter and Paul, was "the earliest

bishop of the Christian Church."[1] If the Apostle James was a prelate, we surely descend a step when we claim a similar position for Timothy and Titus, mere uninspired evangelists, sent for a time to labour in special districts, and clothed for the time with apostolic authority. But the descent is greater still when the same order is claimed for the angel of the Church, that is, the pastor of a single congregation. If any one of these is the real prelate of whom we are in search, it is not easy to see how any of the others can be. Between the apostle at one end of the scale, and the angel of the Church at the other, there is as great a difference as between a prince of the blood and a country justice. It is as if in constitutional history a man wished to show a historical precedent for some modern civil office, say the Court of Arches, and found it first in the monarch, then in the Peers of Parliament, then in the Lord Chancellor, then in the county court judge, and last of all in a borough magistrate. It is possible some one or other might be true, but they cannot all be true. The examples are inconsistent, and destroy each other.

In order to hide this inconsistency, and to add a little dignity to the subject before it is dropped, some writers are adroit enough to take these so-called arguments in reverse order. They begin with the "angel" in the last book of the Bible, and advance backwards to Timothy and Titus; then they go on in the same direction to James, and then farther back to the apostles and to the seventy, finding at every step ample authority for the full-blown prelate. But all this time they are moving in the wrong direction. They reverse the chronological order. The apostles were all for seven years members of the same congregation, and it was afterwards that James became sole resident apostle; it was after James and the elders received Paul on his return from the third missionary journey (Acts xxi. 18), that Timothy was left in Ephesus and Titus sent to Crete; and the first century was near its close when John fulfilled his commission to write to the angels of the seven Churches.[2] Taking them, then, in the natural and chronological order, the descent is immense

[1] *Outlines*, p. 62.

[2] We adopt the chronology of Conybeare and Howson, who accept the later date of the Pastoral Epistles.

from the "shepherd and bishop" of souls down to the angel of the Church—the last scriptural character in whom the undeveloped germ of a prelate is supposed to hide itself. If there was even one certain specimen of a diocesan bishop in the New Testament, there would be no need of this constant shifting of the ground. Our friends should select one as true bishop, and hold to him. If they would only accept Christ in that capacity, it might harmonize all. We at least would not object. They say, at least some of them, that the Lord Jesus who "ordained" the twelve and sent forth the seventy, is the model of the true bishop. If so, we accept Him willingly in that capacity. He needs no successor, for He never dies; nor does His presence ever leave His Church—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." With Christ for our bishop, and none else, that should end the controversy.

As if suspicious of the strength of his own reasoning, and as if despairing that any ingenuity could produce from the New Testament the fully developed hierarchy of after times, Dr. Wordsworth states that "it was not to have been expected that the ministry of the Church would be able to assume what was eventually to be its full and perfect organization."[1] But if there be any reasonable foundation for his statement, already quoted, that the angel of the Church was a diocesan bishop, and the Apostle John an archbishop, he need not despair of his powers; with equal plausibility and equal truth he may assert Peter to be pope and Paul a cardinal. Other writers, no less worthy of respect than the Bishop of St. Andrews, are not by any means so confident of the strength of the argument. Mr. Litton, for example, states:—

"While it is clearly recorded that the apostles instituted the orders of presbyters and deacons, it is not so clearly recorded (*indeed, it is not recorded at all*) that they instituted the order of bishops. It certainly is a curious but highly characteristic fact, that that particular order of the ministry which the Church system pronounces to be most divine and the most essential, should rest upon scriptural proof, to say the least, *obscure and ambiguous*, as compared with that which can be adduced for the two inferior orders."[2]

[1] *Outlines*, p. 22. [2] *Church of Christ*, p. 426.

Dean Stanley surrenders the divine right of the prelatical system when he says:—

"It is as sure that nothing like modern Episcopacy existed before the close of the first century, as it is that nothing like modern Presbyterianism existed after the beginning of the second."[1]

It is singular enough, that although the scriptural proof of the prelatic system is entirely wanting, and although some candidly admit that diocesan Episcopacy is "more recent than all the writings of the New Testament," yet they maintain all the same that it took origin with the apostles. A remark incidentally dropped by Augustine may help to explain this:—

"Many things are observed by the whole Church, and therefore are fairly held to have been enjoined by the apostles, which yet are not mentioned in their writings."[2]

This statement explains much in High Church authors, ancient and modern. They think, though they do not always avow it, the Universal Church never errs; their own sect is the Universal Church; their sect has sanctioned this custom, or doctrine, or institution; this sanction is virtually apostolical authority. So reason many who pass for profound theologians. It is not so with us. One line from the pen of an apostle is of more weight in our opinion, than the unanimous sanction of all the sects and Churches of Christendom. Let God be true, and every man a liar.

The nomenclature of the New Testament does not easily fit in to any unscriptural or semi-scriptural system. Among prelatic writers of the minor order there is great dissatisfaction on this very point. The Bible does not speak in the language of their Church system. From their representations one would conclude that no Church officer is named in a natural manner; every name is to be interpreted as if some other officer was meant. The small fry of controversialists, in particular, do not scruple to affirm that when the New Testament speaks of apostles it means bishops; that when it speaks of bishops it means priests; and that when it speaks of deacons it means pastors and teachers.[3] If a system of interpretation

[1] *Institutions*, chap. x. [2] *On Baptism*, B. v. 23.

[3] "The three orders in the Apostolic Church were commonly known as apostles,

like this was legitimate, it would be easy to prove any sort of system whatever from the Scripture. Proof is needed that the Greek writers of the first century understood the words *ἀπόστολος*, *ἐπίσκοπος*, and *διάκονος* to carry this meaning, and why they preferred them to the natural words *ἀρχιερεύς*, *ἱερεύς*, and *ποιμήν*. This has not been done. Any human system can be deduced from the New Testament if it be permissible to say, without regard to the laws of language, and without proving from contemporary use, that the terms of an ancient document mean anything that a modern writer chooses, or anything that suits the necessities of his argument. On false principles like these, it would not take much ingenuity to make out from Scripture a plausible case for Romanism, or Mohammedanism, or Mormonism.

We, on the contrary, do not require, nor do we desire, to explain any term in an unnatural sense. We are content to interpret every term according to the use of it by contemporaries, drawing light from its derivation, the context, or the circumstances in which it is employed. With us the *apostle*, when not used in the literal sense of *one sent forth*, a messenger, is a preacher personally chosen by Christ to bear witness to His resurrection, endowed with supernatural powers, and carrying a commission for the evangelization of the nations. The *bishop* of the New Testament we hold to be a presbyter—one who, in common with other presbyters, is entrusted with the oversight of a flock, and when statedly presiding at public worship, or among his co-presbyters, is the bishop or pastor of the Church. The *deacon* is a Church officer chosen out of the flock specially to serve tables, and to attend to the wants of the widows and the poor. These were the objects for which these offices were originally created, and we desire to keep as near to the scriptural model as our changed circumstances permit. But whether we succeed or fail, we can never say that

presbyters or bishops, and deacons, but are now called bishops, priests, and deacons."

"I have also identified them [the deacons] with the pastors and teachers referred to in Eph. iv. 11." Porter's *Reply*, p. 73.

Speaking of the *elders* in 1 Tim. v. 17, another says, "It seems to us that all these words might be applied either to *bishops in our own sense of the word*, or else to *parish priests*, and that either order might contain individuals of both characters." Scott's *Talk*, p. 166.

the terms applied to these offices mean now something different from what they meant when used by the inspired writers.

The true method of studying these terms is, not to look at them through the distorting glass of modern institutions, but to go directly to the Scriptures to find out what was included in each office, and what was not included in it, when the apostles of Christ were living among men. Our very aim should be to shut out all ideas which, at a period subsequent to the apostolic age, were imported from without, and modified the meaning of these terms for modern ages. We wish to see in its naked truth the system of government set up in the Church by the apostles, in order that we may be able to discriminate between the divine and the human in modern organizations. This has many advantages. It enables us to approach with greater closeness to the true model. It is to us one of the most interesting studies, first to ascertain as accurately as possible what properly belonged to each of these offices at its origin, and then to trace up through nineteen centuries the additions it has received, the modifications it has undergone, the changes through which it has passed. The result is that, owing to a series of minute alterations, the offices of the apostolic age, originally simple and adapted to the circumstances of men, have almost imperceptibly grown into a hierarchy, and the pure elements of Church government in the first century have developed into the Prelacy and Papacy of the Middle Ages. It is humiliating to discover how soon the divine system was overlaid with human additions, and how far the very best attempt made in modern times to recover what was lost, has to some extent failed in its design.

CHAPTER V.—PRELACY.

THE HISTORICAL ARGUMENT.

It has been shown that nothing in the New Testament makes it necessary to believe in the divine origin of diocesan Episcopacy, while there is strong reason to believe in the divine authority of a different polity. Once it is settled to our satisfaction that the prelatic system is not found in the Bible, it does not concern us in the least to know when and where it came into existence. Supposing it proved that it sprang into life within two hours after the last apostle died, the coincidence would be striking, but it would not in the slightest degree shake the convictions of any man who makes the word of God the rule of his faith. The second and third centuries are not entitled to dictate to the after ages; on the contrary, we are warranted to ask, why they themselves should in any degree dare to vary from the precepts and practice of the first and only century of Christian inspiration. Were it proved that Prelacy was set up while the apostles were alive, even this would not be sufficient, except it could also be shown that this was done with their consent and approval. The "mystery of iniquity" in its germ was at work in the first century; but although that fact proves its antiquity, it does not prove that the system it produced was either divine in its origin or true in its substance. There was much in the Church in the days of the apostles for which, without their own authority, it would be very unwarrantable to hold the apostles responsible. Supposing, further, that the prelatic system had been introduced with the tacit sanction of the apostles, but not recorded in the Scriptures, we could scarcely infer that it binds us more than the love-feast; it might have suited the circumstances which then existed, but not the circumstances of future times. We cannot depart from this

principle, that everything to be received as a matter of religious obligation must come to us with the sanction of the word of God. When, therefore, we have shown that Prelacy is not sanctioned by the Holy Scriptures, our work in regard to it is done.

We notice the historical argument for Prelacy, not that from our point of view there is the slightest necessity for doing so, but simply because a man so able as Bishop Lightfoot appears to regard it as important. For this reason it may be useful to point out its defects. Milton[1] says that it is "the wonted shift of error and fond opinion, when they find themselves outlawed of the Bible and forsaken of sound reason, to betake them to their old starting-hole of tradition, and that wild and overgrown covert of antiquity, thinking to farm there at large room, and to find good stabling;" but the real reason why men like Dr. Lightfoot use it, is in hope to supplement the deficiency and strengthen the weakness of the argument which they draw from Scripture. Mr. Litton and Bishop Lightfoot admit this deficiency. The former says:—

"In truth, it does seem an arduous task to discover in the inspired record, *taken alone*, the existence of an order of ministers, not apostles, and yet superior to presbyters and deacons."

Speaking on the origin of the episcopal order, which it must be remembered is the main question in debate, Mr. Litton says:—

"Upon this, the *essential* point in the present argument, *Scripture leaves us very much in the dark*."[2]

Bishop Lightfoot thinks that among the Jewish Christians, in James the Lord's brother, he finds the only example of a modern bishop prior to the destruction of Jerusalem; and he states that "as late as the year 70 no distinct signs of episcopal government have hitherto appeared in Gentile Christendom."[3] That candid statement, made in the interests of truth, and so honourable to the writer, disposes, so far as he is concerned, of the argument founded on Timothy and Titus, and acquits Paul, who did not survive A.D. 68, from

[1] "Tract of Prelatical Episcopacy," in *Works*, vol. ii. p. 434.
[2] *Church of Christ*, pp. 411 and 425.
[3] *Philippians*, p. 199.

having ought to do with the prelatic system. In that ring of Churches of which he was the founder, from Antioch round about to Illyricum, he who was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles never set up a prelate, according to Bishop Lightfoot,—a fact which shows no small indifference to the necessities of the Church and of man, if Prelacy is a system so rich in blessing as some of its modern admirers would have us to believe. It was in the fifty years of "historical blank" following the destruction of Jerusalem, that the system took its rise. "Unless," says Dr. Lightfoot, "we have recourse to a sweeping condemnation of received documents, it seems vain to deny that early in the second century the episcopal office was firmly and widely established."

Mr. Litton states the historical argument in this form:—

"However difficult it may be to establish from Scripture alone the apostolicity of Episcopacy, we yet have the strongest grounds for believing it to be an apostolic institution. But the weight of evidence rests on uninspired testimony, or rather upon that testimony combined with precedents furnished by Scripture. By the aid of history and Scripture combined, it may be satisfactorily made out that apostles either instituted or sanctioned the episcopal form of government."[1] Mr. Haddan puts the case more broadly. He says, that when the Apocalypse was written, that is, about 98 A.D., "Diocesan Episcopacy had undoubtedly spread over the Church."[2]

The historical argument resolves itself into a series of alleged facts, of which proof is drawn from the writings of Christian teachers belonging to the early centuries:—

1. The apostles are said to have ordained bishops over Churches. Of this allegation, such proofs are given as the following:—

IRENÆUS (182–185):—"We are in a position to reckon up those who were by the apostles instituted bishops in the Churches, and the succession of these men to our own times."—*Heresies*, iii. 3. 3.

TERTULLIAN (190–220):—"We have also John's foster-Churches. For although Marcion rejects his Apocalypse, the order of the bishops [thereof] will yet rest on John as their author."—*Against Marcion*, iv. 5.

[1] *Church of Christ*, p. 430. [2] *Apostolical Succession*, p. 108.

2. A bishop is named in connection with many cities and places in Christendom early in the second century. It is on this fact that Bishop Lightfoot dwells at greatest length. Out of many proofs and illustrations which he gives of this fact, we select the following:—

POLYCARP of Smyrna (110–155):—"Polycarp and the presbyters with him to the Church of God sojourning at Philippi."—*Epistle*, Pref.

Upon this extract Dr. Lightfoot comments thus:—"Polycarp writes as a bishop, for he distinguishes himself from his presbyters."

IRENÆUS of Lyons (182–185):—"But Polycarp also was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also by apostles in Asia appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth."—*Heresies*, iii. 3. 4.

POLYCRATES of Ephesus (190–200):—"Polycarp of Smyrna, both bishop and martyr. Thraseas also, bishop and martyr of Eumenia, who is buried at Smyrna. Why should I mention Sagaris, bishop and martyr, who rests at Laodicea?"—In Eusebius, *Ecc. History*, v. 24.

3. Catalogues of bishops, who are said to have succeeded the apostles in the most important cities, are given by the early writers. As much stress is laid by certain writers on these catalogues, we give two specimens, one referring to the Church at Rome, the other to the Church at Jerusalem.

ROME.

"The blessed apostles then, having founded and built up the Church [at Rome], committed into the hands of Linus the office of the episcopate. Of this Linus, Paul makes mention in the Epistles to Timothy. To him succeeded Anacletus, and after him, in the third place from the apostles, Clement was allotted the bishopric; . . . to this Clement succeeded Evaristus. Alexander followed Evaristus; then sixth from the apostles, Sixtus was appointed; after him Telesphorus, who was gloriously martyred; then Hyginus; after him Pius; then after him Anicetus. Soter having succeeded Anicetus, Eleuthesius does now in the twelfth place from the

apostles hold the inheritance of the episcopate."—Irenæus, *Heresies*, iii. 3. 3.

A similar catalogue is given by Eusebius in regard to the bishops of

JERUSALEM.

"The first then was James, called the brother of our Lord, after whom the second was Simeon; the third, Justus; the fourth, Zaccheus; the fifth, Tobias; the sixth, Benjamin; the seventh, John; the eighth, Matthew; the ninth, Philip; the tenth, Seneca; the eleventh, Justus; the twelfth, Levi; the thirteenth, Ephres; the fourteenth, Joseph; and, finally, the fifteenth, Judas. These are all the bishops of Jerusalem that filled up the time from the apostles until the above-mentioned time, all of the circumcision."[1]

Similar lists for Antioch and Alexandria are also given by Eusebius and other writers.

4. "The frequent notices of encyclical letters issued, and Synods held towards the close of the second century."[2] This is adduced as an additional testimony for the wide extension of Episcopacy; but it would give us more confidence provided Bishop Lightfoot had given us any satisfactory proof, that none except prelates could send out circulars and convene Synods.

On these different statements and others of a similar kind, Mr. Haddan founds the general and sweeping conclusion, that "Bishops *in the later sense* are actually found in every Church whatsoever, from the moment that any evidence exists at all."[3]

After enumerating a large number of places in connection with which bishops are mentioned by early writers, Dr. Lightfoot states: "The notices thus collected present a large body of evidence establishing the fact of the early and extensive adoption of Episcopacy in the Christian Church."[4]

Such is the historical argument upon which the main support of Episcopacy is made to rest by Bishop Lightfoot and others. Upon this argument we remark—

[1] *Ecc. Hist.* iv. 5. [2] Lightfoot's *Philippians*, p. 212.
[3] Smith's *Christian Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 211.
[4] *Philippians*, p. 225.

1. The origin of the prelatic system is somewhat suspicious. The story of its birth is not told in the New Testament. The position of James at Jerusalem has indeed some faint resemblance to a fixed diocesan, but only on the supposition that he was not a resident apostle. But that is the very thing that we have produced good reason to believe he was—a resident apostle and not a prelate. The whole institution of Episcopacy was matured, as Lightfoot states, "during the historical blank, which extends over half a century after the fall of Jerusalem," that is, between 70 and 120 A.D.[1] Were it not for the case of James already discussed, even Bishop Lightfoot himself would admit, that during this period the system was originated as well as matured. But we have already shown that there is no contemporary or other satisfactory evidence that James the Lord's brother was a prelate. The date of its birth must therefore fall within the "historical blank." But a "historical blank" is a very dubious birth-time for what its friends and admirers profess to believe is a divine institution.

2. That the apostles ordained bishops in the Churches, nobody entertains a doubt more than that they ordained deacons. The only strange thing is that any man can regard that statement as decisive. The question still remains, what kind of bishops did they ordain? Were they bishops such as existed in the apostolic age, of whom a plurality existed in every congregation, and who were identical with presbyters, as the Bishop of Durham and many others have clearly proved;[2] or were they bishops, such as have existed from the fourth century and ever since, having under them many Churches and many pastors? Everything turns on this point, were the bishops whom they ordained congregational or diocesan bishops? It is a common error to suppose that what exists now existed of old, and unthinking readers are apt to imagine, when they find that the Apostle John ordained a bishop, that he consecrated a dignitary such as now goes by that name. Against this error, Stillingfleet seems to have warned in vain:—

"Nothing," says he, "hath been a more fruitful mother of mistakes and errors than the looking upon the practice of the primitive Church through the glass of our own customs. Especially when under the same name (as it is very often

[1] *Philippians*, p. 205. [2] Lightfoot on *Philippians*, p. 95.

seen) something far different from what was primarily intended by the use of the word is set forth to us. It were no difficult task to multiply examples in this kind; wherein men meeting with the same names, do apprehend the same things by them, which they now through custom signify, without taking notice of any alteration in the things themselves signified by those names."[1]

He gives as an example the Latin word *missa*, which originally signified a simple religious service. In course of time, about the fifth century, it came to signify a religious service in which the Lord's Supper is administered. That is the sense of the word in the Roman Church at the present time, in which it is represented by the English word *mass;* whereupon Romish polemical writers insist that where the word *missa* occurs in any ancient Latin Father, it always means what would now be called a mass. He illustrates it also by the use of the Greek word λειτουργία, which in the apostolic age was used to express ministration, or any kind of service which one rendered to another. When the divine service consisted in simple prayer, praise, reading the Scriptures, preaching the gospel, and celebrating the communion supper, this was called λειτουργία; afterwards the name was continued after the novel idea had crept into the Church, that in celebrating the communion a priest was offering an unbloody sacrifice for the sins of men. Whereupon modern writers will have it that the modern idea must be carried back into the primitive use of the word; and that λειτουργούντων, in Acts xiii. 2, is to be translated, "while they were sacrificing," or as some prefer, "while they were saying mass." Thus they import into the ancient word an idea of later times. So it is with the word ἐπίσκοπος (bishop). In the New Testament it simply means an overseer, of whom there were several in the one flock. When, towards the end of the second century, one of these bishops grew into the constant president or pastor of the congregation, he was called *the* bishop, to distinguish him from the other presbyters over whom he presided. He was simply the pastor of a Church. When, at a period still later, the pastor grew into the prelate, having many pastors and many Churches under him; and

[1] *Irenicum*, p. 237.

when, at a still later date, he grew into a baron of the empire and a peer of parliament, still he continued to be called the bishop. Some people, therefore, thoughtlessly supposing that the name always denoted what it denotes now, bring themselves to believe, that when an ancient Father remarks that an apostle ordained a bishop, he means that he consecrated some mitred and croziered dignitary, such as the modern ages are familiar with. But it is not so. The bishops whom the apostles ordained were overseers of the congregation—humble men who laboured often with their own hands (Acts xx. 35), but nevertheless teachers of the people and rulers of the Church (1 Tim. v. 17). When one of these at a later date came to preside among his brethren, it was told afterwards as his distinction that he was ordained by an apostle—a statement in many cases true enough, but in a sense different from that in which most episcopal writers use the word. There is no evidence that an apostle ever ordained a presbyter to rule as bishop over other presbyters. To say that an apostle ordained a bishop, is simply to say in New Testament phrase that he ordained a presbyter, the Bishop of Durham himself being witness; but we do not see that any new light is cast on the matter by such a statement. What is needed in order to support the prelatic system is to show, not that the apostles ordained bishops, which is admitted on all sides, but that the bishop so ordained was a diocesan, having control over various pastors and various Churches, with primary power to confirm and to consecrate, and exclusive power to ordain.

Milton's answer to this argument is as strong to-day as it was two hundred and fifty years ago:—

"Tertullian says that the Church of Smyrna had Polycarpus placed there by John, and the Church of Rome Clement, ordained by Peter; and so the rest of the Churches did show what bishops they received by appointment of the apostles. None of this will be contradicted, for we have it out of the Scripture that bishops or presbyters, who were the same, were left by the apostles in every Church, and they might perhaps give some special charge to Clement, or Polycarpus, or Linus, and put some special trust in them for the experience they had of their faith and constancy; it remains yet to be evinced out of this and the like places, which will never be, that the

word bishop is otherwise taken than in the language of St. Paul and the Acts for an order above presbyters. We grant them bishops, we grant them worthy men, we grant them placed in several Churches by the apostles, we grant that Irenæus and Tertullian affirm this; but that they were placed in a superior order above the presbytery, show from all these words why we should grant. It is not enough to say the apostle left this man bishop in Rome, and that other in Ephesus; but to show when they altered their own decree set down by St. Paul, and made all the presbyters underlings to one bishop."[1]

3. None of the genuine works quoted as testifying to Episcopacy is older than Hegesippus, who flourished 161–180, that is, at the time when the name bishop had grown somewhat limited in its application, and instead of being a synonym for presbyter, was applied to that presbyter who statedly presided at the public worship of the congregation. His evidence, and still more, the evidence of those who followed him for a century, is subject to two serious objections: *first*, it is too late in time to enable the authors to speak of events of the first century from personal knowledge; and *secondly*, it is not accompanied with such circumstances as enable us to decide with certainty whether the bishop spoken of was a diocesan or not. Until the existence of a diocesan is proved, that is, till we find the unmistakable presence of at least one man with charge of a district containing various Churches and various pastors, with primary power to confirm and consecrate, and exclusive power to ordain, we are not justified in departing from the New Testament sense of the word bishop—the teacher and ruler of a single congregation.

In a passage already quoted, Hegesippus speaks of Simeon as succeeding James the Just as "second bishop." Polycrates (190–200) says, "There were seven of my relatives bishops, and I am the eighth."[2] The Muratorian fragment speaks of John "with his fellow-pupils and bishops;" and Irenæus and Tertullian and Clement also mention bishops in the citations already given. In regard to all these it may be observed:—

(1.) The statements are all taken from writers who wrote

[1] "Of Prelatical Episcopacy," in Milton's *Works*, vol. ii. p. 432.
[2] Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.* v. 24.

towards the end of the second century, when the first presbyter in the congregation was usually spoken of as *the* bishop.

(2.) It was only natural for them to speak and write in the language of their own time; but none of them supplies evidence that the bishop of whom he spoke was a diocesan.

(3.) Loose and inexact statements on one point destroy our confidence in the accuracy of others made by the same writer. Thus, when Irenæus states that Stephen "was the first *elected* into the diaconate by the apostles,"[1] and the inspired writer of the Acts, from whom Irenæus derives his information, shows us that this was not the fact (Acts vi. 5), how can we trust implicitly to the accuracy of Irenæus when he informs us that Polycarp was "by apostles in Asia appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna"?

(4.) From the vague expression "seven bishops" mentioned by Polycrates, it is utterly impossible to infer with certainty that they were diocesan, and not congregational bishops.

(5.) The quotation and story from Clement[2] are not historical, being written not less than a hundred years after the event; they speak of past events in the language which was true of his own time; and the traditional language goes too far, implying that in the time of John the people had already lost their right of choice.

(6.) These are the oldest testimonies. None of them is earlier than the close of the reign of Hadrian (A.D. 138). Previous to that time, apart from the Ignatian forgeries, there is no evidence even of the first presbyter being called "*the* bishop." After that time, as the citation from contemporary writers shows, there was one of the presbyters in the local Church to whom that name was applied. Beyond that, they state nothing. Certainly they state nothing to show that the bishop was a prelate in his peculiar functions, or in his relationship to other Churches and to other pastors. Nothing is said in any of them to annul, supplement, or modify the testimony of Scripture. One of the bishops of the local Church has grown up to be *the* bishop—that is all.

4. A mere catalogue of bishops in reality proves nothing, because we cannot infer from such a catalogue the position or

[1] *Heresies*, iv. 15. 1: "Primus in diaconium ab apostolis electus est."

[2] "The Rich Man," chap. 42.

functions of those on the list. One might as well allege the Papacy to be a divine institution, and produce in proof an unbroken catalogue of popes. That a series of men succeeded each other as pastors of Churches in the second and third centuries, and in all centuries since, we have not the slightest doubt, any more than we doubt that to one of these exclusively the name bishop became appropriated towards the close of the second. But we cannot infer anything as to duties and functions and rank from a bare list of names. Gieseler, the German historian, accounts for the manufacture of these catalogues:—

"Ignatius," says he, "through the instrumentality of his Epistles, recommended Episcopacy universally as a condition of unity, and that too in the most urgent terms; and thus the first presbyters soon generally moved up to the higher step as ἐπίσκοποι, although they retained besides for a long time the title πρεσβύτεροι. When the attempt was made at a later period to carry up the series of bishops, as successors of the apostles, to the apostles themselves, the most distinguished presbyters of earlier times were selected to be the first bishops. In this way we explain the different accounts of the order of the first Roman bishops."[1]

To say that bishops succeeded apostles, and succeeded each other, is in reality to say nothing, except it is shown in what respect they succeeded them. The seven deacons might be said to succeed the apostles, for the apostles "served tables" before the seven were chosen. The elders succeeded the apostles, for "the twelve" governed the Church at Jerusalem before the institution of elders. The bishop of the second century in cases not a few succeeded an apostle, for an apostle always presided in any Church which he visited. But a mere chronological succession in reality proves nothing. Roman history records that the king was succeeded by the consul, and the consul by the emperor. The case shows that although one man succeeds another in the order of time and place, it does not follow that there is a transmission of power and functions more than a transmission of gifts and learning. The military post which fifty years ago was held by a general of division, may be occupied to-day by a captain of militia; but

[1] *Church History*, vol. i. p. 109, and the authorities there referred to.

although the captain has succeeded the general, the mere succession is no proof of equal rank or of equal powers. That question is not to be settled by a catalogue of officers. We might have a long catalogue of men all designated bishops in a Church planted by apostles; but the first half-dozen might be merely presbyters, and the next half-dozen pastors of a single congregation, and third half-dozen might rule over a dozen congregations, yet all might with less or more propriety be called bishops, and all said in a sense to be successors of the apostles. But still the question would remain unanswered, In what sense were these men bishops, and in what sense did they succeed the apostles? Dr. Stillingfleet, after discussing this point, thus concludes: "This argument from succession is weak, and proves not at all the certainty of the power those persons enjoyed."

5. The bishop who presides as first among the presbyters in charge of a single Church, is quite a different functionary from a bishop who rules a diocese containing many presbyters and many Churches. The former is sanctioned by New Testament practice as an institution set up in every Church organized by apostles; the latter, on the admission of its own friends, has little more to show for itself than the rather exceptional and temporary arrangement of apostolic delegates. The function of the former is that of the pastor—to feed the flock of Christ; the function of the latter is to govern the clergy of a wide district, and to guide many flocks, most of which he rarely sees, and whose members, with few exceptions, he does not know. The distinctive work of the scriptural bishop is to preach the gospel and administer ordinances to the flock of Christ; the peculiar work of the latter is to ordain, to confirm, and to consecrate, leaving to his subordinates the work of preaching and baptizing.

The weak spot in the historical argument, is the omission to prove that the bishops spoken of by the writers of the early part of the second century were bishops in the modern sense of the word, and not bishops in the apostolic sense of the word —that is, the overseer or pastor of a single congregation. Dr. Lightfoot is much too cautious and candid to say what Dr. Wordsworth, without proving it, does not scruple to assert, namely, that "they were from the first what no one denies

they were afterwards, prelates, or bishops in the modern sense of this latter name, and bishops only."[1] James the Less is Dr. Lightfoot's only example of a modern bishop to be found in the apostolic age, and the function assigned to him is "the head or president of the college or presbytery"[2]—that is, he statedly presided as every pastor does in meetings of the congregation, or of the presbyters of the congregation under his care. Simeon succeeded James as bishop of Jerusalem, Eusebius informs us; if so, his position was the same as that of James,—president of the presbyters of a single congregation,—a fact which does not make much for the prelatic system. But if James was only president of the college or congregational presbytery, and if his successor, the son of Cleophas, was something else,—that is, the president of all the presbyters and Churches in a diocese, with exclusive rights and prerogatives attached to his office,—it was essential to Dr. Lightfoot's argument that this should be proved to demonstration. Now this is the very point that Dr. Lightfoot omits to prove, and the omission is the fatal flaw in the historical argument.

Polycarp, as stated in a second century document, was "bishop of the Catholic Church in Smyrna."[3] We do not question the statement, if the meaning is that he was first among the presbyters of the Church at Smyrna; but if the exigencies of argument require it to mean a diocesan bishop, then we, who do not believe that any such Church officer existed in the second century, must be forgiven for demanding proof that the venerable man was ruler of a diocese, and that his spiritual sway extended to other presbyters and to other Churches outside Smyrna. In like manner, Papias was bishop of Hierapolis;[4] but if it is asserted that he was so in the prelatic sense, it must first be proved that he was the spiritual overseer of a diocese (διοίκησις) and not of a parish (παροικία), and that all ordinations in the diocese were conducted by him. The list of Roman bishops, as given by Irenæus, contains the name of Linus; but if we are to accept the occurrence of his name on a very dubious catalogue, as proof that he was a bishop in the modern sense, we are entitled to have our weak faith strengthened by a few

[1] *Outlines*, p. 105.
[2] *Comment. on Philippians*, p. 196.
[3] *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, 16.
[4] Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.* iii. 36.

historical examples of the confirmations or consecrations which in that capacity he performed. In no other way can we be sure what kind of bishop Linus was.

The bishop of the first century, as Dr. Lightfoot shows, and all admit, was a presbyter, and not a prelate. Can we be fairly expected to admit that the bishop of the second century was something different, except it be first proved? The mere recurrence of the name is no proof of a change in the sense: and we cannot conceive of any satisfactory proof that the bishop of the second century was no longer a mere presbyter, but a fully developed prelate, except that he did the special work that all prelates are appointed to do. For let it never be forgotten, that the bishop, about whose existence in the second century the whole argument has arisen, is "the single president of a diocese, having presbyters, deacons, and laity under him, and possessing exclusive powers of ordination, and primarily of confirmation with primary authority in the administration of sacraments."[1] The remark of Dr. Wordsworth strengthens the conviction; for he says, "We have no hint whatever in the history of the Church of an inverse change at all having taken place in the office of a bishop."[2] The bishop of the first century was a presbyter only, as, along with Dr. Lightfoot, we all acknowledge; but if, as Dr. Wordsworth states, there is "no hint" of a change in the office, the bishop of the second century is a presbyter too. Beyond all question, if it is essential to the historical argument that the bishop of the second century is more than a presbyter, it is not enough to assume it. It needs to be proved. Dr. Lightfoot does not prove, he only assumes. That gives the death-blow to his whole argument.

6. Some might suppose that if the whole question turns on the extent of the bishop's charge, it cannot be a matter of much importance; but this we regard as a material point in the settlement of the question. The scriptural bishop is by divine commission entrusted with special duties—feeding the flock, ruling the congregation, watching for souls, praying with the sick, labouring in word and doctrine. These duties it is possible to discharge if the bishop is the overseer of a single

[1] Article "Bishop," in Smith and Cheetham's *Dictionary of Antiquities*.
[2] *Outlines*, p. 106.

Church, whose united worship he conducts, whose families he visits, and whose individual members he knows. But if the bishop is the ruler of many pastors and of many congregations, whom he seldom sees and whose members in general are not his personal acquaintance, it is quite impossible for him to discharge to an aggregate of Churches those duties which Scripture enjoins upon him. He cannot in person watch for their souls, nor pray over their sick, nor admonish them, nor feed the flock with knowledge. An occasional address to a Church at a visitation once in three or four years is not, so far as they are concerned, to "labour in word and doctrine." He is forced by necessity to teach them and guide them, and watch for their souls, by proxy; the extent of the charge makes it impossible to do otherwise. This necessitates the employment of a great number of men, who are called priests or presbyters, but who in reality are the bishop's deputies, entrusted only with those duties which the bishop commits to them, and over whom he exercises a general superintendence. This gives the bishop a new position. He is elevated over these men; for he appoints them, and they act under his directions. His own functions are to discharge that portion of duty which he withholds from the subordinate clergy and reserves for himself. He ordains and confirms, and he consecrates. The work that is performed by a diocesan is a very small portion of the work, and it is work of a different kind from that which Scripture prescribes to a bishop: and the work of a presbyter in a diocese is never complete until the bishop comes to perfect it. His prayers cannot consecrate the edifice; his hands cannot confirm the children he has baptized; nor without the bishop can he convey to others the orders which he himself possesses. A diocesan is not a complete bishop, for he is placed in a position where he cannot do in person the work which the Scripture enjoins upon a bishop; nor are the presbyters under him complete presbyters, for they are stripped of the power to ordain and rule, which duties in the Churches organized by the apostles were exercised by all presbyters.

The extent of the diocese is therefore a matter of material consequence. It depends on the extent of the charge whether the scriptural duties of the bishop can be done or not done.

The attempt to do them by proxy results in a necessary division of functions between bishop and presbyter, to the undue elevation of the one and the unwarranted depreciation of the other. In fact, the bishop, who has a diocese instead of a parish for his charge, demands for himself of necessity a quite different position from that of any apostolic Church officer whatever. But all the duties which belong to the bishop according to the New Testament may be, and as a rule are, discharged by the bishop or pastor, who has only one flock under his care.

If the extent of the charge, whether a parish or diocese, makes no difference, what exception in that case can any Episcopalian take to the episcopate of a parish minister? The Presbyterian or Independent pastor is a true bishop. He performs to his flock all the functions which Scripture assigns to that office. He labours in word and doctrine, exercises rule, feeds the flock, admonishes the erring, and ordains in association with others when there is occasion. There is no function belonging to a bishop that the minister of a Presbyterian congregation could not exercise, if he thought it scriptural and right for him to do so. His charge, however, is the parish, not the diocese. If, therefore, the extent of the charge is, as some believe, of no consequence, we do not see what prevents all who think so from regarding the parish minister as a true bishop. If there is no difference in principle between the bishop presiding over one Church and the bishop presiding over Churches scattered over half-a-dozen counties, we cannot understand why the Bishop of St. Andrews makes such a noise. If the extent of the charge is of no consequence, as they tacitly assume, then the pastor of a parish in Scotland is as much a bishop as the Primate of Canterbury, or my Lord of Durham.

7. Episcopalian writers themselves are obliged by force of circumstances to admit the meaning that we attach to the word. Thus Bishop Wordsworth, referring to 1 Tim. iii. 1: "If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work," observes that, "These words may refer to the *pastoral charge of a congregation* and *to the presbyter who is to occupy such a charge*."[1] He thus admits that a presbyter occupying the

[1] *Outlines*, p. 50.

pastoral congregation may be a true bishop. From such an inveterate opponent of the Presbyterian system we could not expect more than the admission, that the bishop of the first century *may* be a presbyter who occupies the pastoral charge of a congregation. If so, why are we to assume that the bishop of the second century *must* be something different? and that, too, in face of the statement of the same writer, who in words already quoted says distinctly—"We have no hint whatever in the history of the Church of any inverse change, or *any change at all*, having taken place in the office of a bishop." That being so, it is clear that the bishop of the second century is exactly the same as that of the first. The bishop's admission, that a scriptural bishop may be the presbyter occupying the pastoral charge of a congregation, is the death-blow to his own argument. That is the point which we maintain. We say also there is no evidence for the bishop being in the second century different from what he was in the first; and as in the first century he may have been "a presbyter occupying a pastoral charge," that is, a pastor, nobody has a right to assume without proof that in the second he must be a prelate or a bishop in the modern sense of that word.

Dr. Lightfoot also makes a similar admission. He says that when Polycarp wrote his *Epistle to the Philippians* in the early part of the second century, "Episcopacy did not exist at all among the Philippians at this time, or existed only in an elementary form, so that the bishop was a mere president of the presbyteral council."[1] The "president of the presbyteral council" is only a high-sounding title for the presbyter presiding among the eldership of a single congregation,—a personage who would now be called the minister or pastor; so that, according to Dr. Lightfoot, in one Church at least of the second century the bishop was the pastor or elder presiding at meetings of the congregational presbytery. Mark these two admissions, so fatal to the argument for Episcopacy. Dr. Wordsworth affirms that the first century bishop, whose office is so good and desirable, may be a presbyter occupying the pastoral charge of a congregation, and denies that Church history gives us any hint of a change in his office; while Dr. Lightfoot states that the bishop of

[1] *Comment. on Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, p. 213.

the important Church of Philippi, at a time well forward in the second century, was "a mere president of the presbyteral council." Both these statements we accept as truths which cannot be disproved; but that being so, what sound reason can either of these learned prelates produce, to show that up till the end of the second century the bishop was more than a pastor and president of the council of elders in any Church of Christendom?

8. The gentle and unnoticed method of official promotion, if the use of such a word is permissible in the case, proves the same thing. In the early ages, when the presiding presbyter passed away, another presbyter as a matter of course, and without any special ceremony, for all had been already ordained, succeeded to the vacant office, presiding in the congregational presbytery and at meetings of the Church. Our belief that the presbyter who thus presided is essentially the same in office with the other presbyters of the congregation, is confirmed by the fact that we have no record of any special ordination, or, as it would now be called, consecration, through which a presbyter passed on becoming bishop, till we reach the fourth century. The reason is obvious; while presbyter and bishop are the same office in fact, one ceremony of ordination is sufficient; but when the two names designate different offices, each requires a separate rite of inauguration, and to distinguish these rites one is called ordination and the other consecration. The absence of every trace of consecration apart from ordination in the second century, is sufficiently accounted for by the fact that the presbyter who was then called upon to preside in the Church meeting or among his fellow-presbyters, did so without his supposing himself, or it being supposed by others, that he was promoted to a new order. When the constitution of the Church developed further, it came to be very different; the consecration of a bishop became a new rite, and expanded with the growth of pride and ignorance into an imposing and gaudy ceremonial.

9. The Epistles of Ignatius frequently mention in conjunction the bishop, the presbyters, and the deacons.[1] This is regarded by Dr. Lightfoot and by other Episcopalian writers as indicating, that in the time of that dubious personage the

[1] *Epistle to Polycarp*, chap. vi.

terms bishop and presbyter had ceased to be synonymous.[1] The argument is of the same validity as that of a writer who, living two thousand years hence, would maintain that because some Churches of the nineteenth century had ministers, elders, and deacons, these Churches admitted the threefold ministry, and were not Presbyterian Churches. The utmost that could fairly be inferred is, that owing to some cause, a little inconsistency with the primitive equality of all presbyters, in the appointment of one of their number to preside over them, had already set in. Nobody denies that, at the time when the so-called Ignatian Epistles were written, this was really the case.

This raises the question which Dr. Lightfoot has made his own, and on which he has descanted with much learning and industry—What is the true age of the Ignatian Epistles? Were they written in the period between 107 and 117, or were they written by somebody in the name of the martyr after he was dead? The real Ignatius, it is generally admitted, died in the reign of Trajan, though some call this in question too.[2] But the real question is about the Epistles attributed to him; are they genuine? and if so, which of the three recensions can lay claim to that character? Bishop Lightfoot has changed his mind upon the subject. He formerly received as alone genuine the three short Syriac Epistles, published by Cureton; but he has given up this opinion, he now occupies the old position so stoutly defended by Pearson, and has recently made an elaborate attempt to prove that the middle recension—that is, the seven Epistles as published by Ussher and Vossius—are the only genuine Epistles of Ignatius.[3] Why all this labour spent on these trashy Epistles? Newman lets us know. He says: "If we turn our attention to the beginnings of apostolical teaching after His ascension, we shall find ourselves unable to fix an historical point at which the growth of doctrine ceased, and the rule of faith was at once settled. Not on the day of Pentecost, for St. Peter had still to learn at Joppa about the baptism of Cornelius; not at Joppa and Cæsarea, for St. Paul had to

[1] Lightfoot on *Philippians*, p. 208.

[2] See *Expositor* for December 1885, and January and March 1886.

[3] Lightfoot's *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. i. part ii.

write his Epistles; not on the death of the last apostle, for *St. Ignatius had to establish the doctrine of Episcopacy.*"[1] This explains the mystery. Ignatius is to supply something that cannot be found in the writings of Peter and Paul. His genuineness, therefore, must be defended at any cost of time and labour.

10. Lightfoot's defence of the seven Epistles in regard to their genuineness does not seem to me conclusive, for the following reasons:—

(1.) The Ignatian Epistles are out of harmony with all the extant literature of the second century. In all other writers of the time, each Church is in charge of a plurality of men, called indifferently presbyters or bishops; or else the first presbyter who presides among his colleagues, *primus inter pares*, is called *the* bishop. The first is the mode of speaking at the beginning of the century in the *Didache*, in Clement, in Polycarp; the latter form of speech is frequent toward the end of the century, and is found in Irenæus, in Tertullian, and in Clement of Alexandria. The Ignatian Epistles fit in exactly to the literature of the third. They occupy an intermediate position between Irenæus and Cyprian (185–248).

(2.) Forged writings always betray a tendency. They are often meant to gain acceptance for a new idea, or for some novel practice under shelter of an old name. The manifest purpose of the Ignatian Epistles cannot be mistaken. On their very face they carry evidence that their object is the exaltation of Church officers—of the bishop over the presbyter, of the presbyter over the deacon, and of all three over the people. Such a design is credible when the Church is of age; it is hard to believe it of her artless youth, when as yet the apostles of Christ were scarcely cold in their graves.

(3.) The time assigned by those who believe the Epistles to be spurious is suitable, namely, the beginning of the third century; for, as we learn from Hegesippus, it was only after the generation which followed the apostles that the Church fell from her virgin purity.[2]

(4.) There is a strong improbability that any Christian minister of sound mind, under sentence of death, would rave

[1] *Essay on Development*, chap. ii. § 1, p. 107.
[2] Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.* iii. 32.

about the honour to be shown to Church officers in the style of these Epistles; but there is no reason why some clever individual, touched in the brain, and with a purpose to serve, might not produce such a work in the beginning of the third century, and send it out under the name of Ignatius, who was believed to have suffered martyrdom a century before.

(5.) Dr. Lightfoot seems to attach much importance to coincidences in language. But this is a precarious mode of argument. Nobody can be sure from coincidence in expression and in facts whether Sozomen copied from Socrates, or Socrates copied from Sozomen. We may freely admit there are coincidences in language between Irenæus and the Ignatian Epistles, but we find in this as potent a proof that the forger of the Ignatian Epistles had Irenæus under his eye, as that Irenæus wrote with the Ignatian Epistles before him.

(6.) Besides, as Harnack points out, the very work which Dr. Lightfoot undertakes to defend is the very centre of a knot of forgeries. The three short Syriac Epistles are forgeries; the fifteen long Epistles are forgeries. The Acts of the Martyrdom of Ignatius are inventions of the fifth and sixth centuries, yet Dr. Lightfoot treats them with as much respect as if they were documents admittedly genuine. The whole thing is suspicious, first and last. If the seven Vossian Epistles are alone genuine and true, their associations are unfortunate: time has brought them into bad company.

(7.) We may be asked, what is our own theory as to the genesis of these Epistles? It is simply this. Some unknown writer early in the third century, able to write, and anxious to elevate the bishop over the presbyters and the people, had before him the following facts, which he was unscrupulous enough to use for his own purpose:—

(*a*) That a Christian pastor named Ignatius, and connected with Antioch, died a martyr at Rome early in the second century.

(*b*) Information derived from Polycarp that he wrote letters to various persons, which letters did not then exist.

(*c*) The work of Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, in which there is a citation from a certain Christian, whom Irenæus does

not name, but who spoke extravagantly in regard to martyrdom.[1]

Out of these elements of fact, the existing letters were constructed. The forger wrought into his work this extract cited by Irenæus, and with a view of recommending the incipient Prelacy of his time, produced a series of letters such as Ignatius might have written, and sent them out to the world under that venerable name. Origen and Eusebius referred to them as the genuine works of Ignatius, under whose name they appeared. In an uncritical age, they could not be expected to do otherwise than accept as the work of Ignatius what popularly passed under his name.

(8.) Every one who knows the story of the Clementines, the Apostolic Canons and Constitutions, the Apostles' Creed, the Heavenly Hierarchy of Dionysius, the Athanasian Creed, and the Forged Decretals, does not need to be told how common it was in ancient times to send forth spurious writings under real names, in order to give them circulation and to lend them importance. This was true of the Epistles of Ignatius, as well as of the documents we have named. The forgery was accomplished at an early period, so early as the third century, as we infer from the fact that he does not claim for his form of the episcopate apostolic authority, or claim that his bishop is the successor of the apostles, or allege that he is more than the bishop of a single congregation. By that time a difference had grown up between the presiding presbyter and the other presbyters of the congregation, which the pseudo-Ignatius aims to make wide and emphatic, and to elevate to the importance of a Christian principle.

(9.) Celsus, the first literary antagonist of Christianity, is not known to modern times, except by the elaborate production which Origen, about 240, wrote in reply to his work. That he lived outside the apostolic age, after sects had begun to separate from the Church, can scarcely be doubted. Keim assigns the production of his work, *The True Word*, to the year 177 A.D. And even Bishop Lightfoot says that he wrote in the reign of Marcus Antoninus (138–161).[2] He charges Christians with shrinking "from raising *altars*, statues, and

[1] *Heresies*, v. 38. 4.

[2] Lightfoot's *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. i. part ii. p. 515.

temples;" and this, he adds, "has been agreed among them" as the badge or distinctive mark of a secret and forbidden society.[1] But when the pseudo-Ignatius wrote, the altar in Christianity was a recognised institution, as much so as bishop, presbyter, and deacon. Thus he says:—

"There is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup into the unity of His blood; *one altar*, as there is one bishop along with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow-servants; that so, whatsoever ye do, ye may do it according to God."[2]

The inference which it is natural to draw from this is, that the Ignatian Epistles were written, not before, but after the time of Celsus.

Tertullian, whose literary life extended from 190 till 220, speaks, in his tract *On the Veiling of Virgins*,[3] of the "virgin-widow" as "a miracle," if not a "monster," and thinks that some other way of according relief might have been found for a needy "virgin," without placing her on the list of widows; but when the pseudo-Ignatius wrote it seems to have been a settled practice, "I salute the families of my brethren, with their wives and children, and the virgins who are called widows."[4] It is very improbable that such a practice should have crept into the Church so early as the real Ignatius, in opposition to the apostolic injunction, "Let none be enrolled as a widow under threescore years old" (1 Tim. v. 9).

(10.) Bishop Lightfoot, in contending for the early date of the Epistles, seems to attach great importance to the fact that they never allude to Montanism or the Paschal controversy, both of which occupied the Christian mind of the latter part of the second century. But, as it seems to us, this is the very thing that might be expected of a forger. If his design is to make the world believe that his production is the work of a man who died so early as 119, he will not allude to anything that occurred in 150 or 196 A.D., if he possibly can avoid it.

(11.) The bishop of the pseudo-Ignatius, like the bishop of Irenæus, is not a prelate or diocesan, but the pastor of a single congregation. What does all this prove for the prelatic system

[1] Origen, *Against Celsus*, book viii. chap. xvii.
[2] Ignatius, *Epistle to the Philadelphians*, iii.
[3] See chap. ix.
[4] *Epistle to the Smyrneans*, Conclusion.

as known to us and to the present generation? A proved difference between the presbyters of a congregation and the one presbyter who presides over them—call him bishop though we may—proves little for diocesan Episcopacy. By the same line of argument, as already mentioned, one might show as convincingly that the Presbyterian Church of the nineteenth century is in reality a prelatic Church, because each of its congregations is provided with a pastor, presbyters, and deacons.

Supposing our theory of the origin of the Ignatian Epistles to be without foundation, and that the seven Ignatian letters were written, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, about the year 112 A.D., what would follow? It could not, under any circumstances, prove diocesan Episcopacy to be a divine institution; it would only prove that the pastoral office in the Christian Church divided into its two branches, the bishop and the presbyter, some sixty or seventy years sooner than we think that the division took place. However difficult it might be to account for such a sudden change so soon after the *Didache* and Clement, and to harmonize it with the literature of that time, it would not add anything to the strength of the scriptural argument, which is the only argument that weighs with any man who makes the word of God his rule of faith. A divine institution cannot be proved by anything outside the Bible.

11. The successive steps by which the first presbyter in a congregation grew up to be a bishop in the modern sense, are at this time of day familiar to most students of Church history. Mr. Hatch has justly said:—

"Between the primitive ἐπίσκοπος and the mediæval bishop there is so wide an interval, that those who are familiar with the picture of the latter may find it difficult to recognise the portrait of the former; at the same time, that interval is not the chasm of an impassable gulf; it is a space of historical ground, every step of which can be traced."[1]

The progress was indeed slow and gradual, but the end stands out in marked contrast to the beginning. To ask us to name the time and place when the primitive bishop vanished and the prelate appeared in his room, is about as reasonable as to ask us to name the hour of the day when the child becomes a man, or on what day of what year the man became

[1] *Organization of the Early Church*, Lect. iv. p. 109.

old. Dr. Wordsworth, indeed, who is characterized by an audacity of assertion not to be found in Mr. Hatch or Bishop Lightfoot, does not scruple to say that "there were *prelatical* successions *founded by apostles* in all the more conspicuous centres of European, Asiatic, and African civilisation."[1] If this flourish is intended to convey anything except the fact that the apostles planted Churches, in which the presiding elder or pastor grew up in the course of two or three centuries to be a prelate, then that something ought to be proved in a satisfactory manner. But in common with Bishop Lightfoot, Mr. Hatch, and many other members of the Anglican communion, we cannot find any "prelatical successions" founded by apostles, but only that they planted institutions, out of which, after their founders were dead, "prelatical successions" ultimately grew.

12. Eusebius of Cæsarea (313–337) wrote in the fourth century, after the prelatic system had developed, at least in the larger cities, by the elevation of the bishop to a distinct order from the presbyter, by the influx of numbers after Christianity had become the State religion, by the formation of suburban and village Churches, and by the division of the original mother Church into separate congregations. At the time when Eusebius lived, the bishop in all the larger cities had developed into a prelate with a diocese, and enjoyed recognition and favour from the emperor. In writing the history of the past, he spoke, as was natural enough, in the language of his own time. The chief pastor in each city provided, as the case might be, with two or more congregations, and quite a number of presbyters, was then spoken of as *the bishop* of the place; we could not expect him, when writing of the chief pastor of an earlier time, it might be with only one congregation and presbyters less than half-a-dozen, to call him by a different name. But the bishop of the fourth century, being a diocesan whose distinctive duty was to ordain, was in reality a different officer from the congregational bishop of the second century, who was only the first presbyter, whose pastoral charge was a single Church, and who was merely the "president of the presbyteral council." The *imperator* of the Roman Republic is a mere general in com-

[1] *Outlines*, p. 86.

mand of an army; but the *imperator* in the time of the Empire is the emperor himself. The word is the same, but the meaning is different. So with the word *bishop*. The bishop of the New Testament is a presbyter whose office is to rule and feed the flock; the bishop of the fourth century is the ruler of many presbyters and many flocks, and whose functions are to ordain and confirm and to consecrate. The same name is applied to both, but the office of the one is entirely different from that of the other.

13. As it is a favourite question with some Romanists to ask, "Where was your Church before Luther?" so it is a favourite statement with the lower grade of prelatic writers, that Presbyterianism was unknown to the world prior to Calvin.[1] The allegation is of about the same weight as one to the effect that the Anglican system took origin with King Henry VIII. Presbyterianism is a system whose main principles are to be found in the Bible, and were acknowledged by persons who fell asleep centuries before Calvin was born. All that Calvin did was to call men's attention to them in the Scriptures, and give effect to them so far as it was possible for him to do in the circumstances in which he was placed. All the grand principles of Presbyterianism were in the Bible, and affirmed by the Church Fathers. Proof of this has been already given. Take the case of *presbyter* and *bishop*, two words which we have seen were only different names for the same officer in the New Testament Church. This, as our opponents admit, is the distinctive characteristic of Presbyterianism, and is directly in contradiction of the prelatic principle, which raises the bishop over the presbyter by divine right. "It has been pretended," says Dr. Hook, "that the bishops and presbyters were the same; and *this opinion has given rise to the sect of the Presbyterians.* But it is clearly proved against them from ecclesiastical antiquity that bishops and presbyters were distinct orders of the clergy."[2] Has it indeed? If "ecclesiastical antiquity" means the New Testament, it has never been so proved; on the contrary, the very opposite has been admitted by Bishop Lightfoot and by thousands more.

[1] "Tracing this system back to its beginning, I find it first originated with John Calvin." Porter, p. 7.

[2] *Church Dictionary*, article "Polity Ecclesiastical."

Not only so, but many of the Fathers, in opposition to the sentiment and custom of the Church in their own time, admitted the truth as it stands in the New Testament, "that the bishops and presbyters were the same." Let any unprejudiced man read the following extracts from Christian writers of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, and then honestly decide whether John Calvin is the first to assert that the bishop is not superior to the presbyter by divine right. If he only reaffirmed and carried out in practice a principle laid down in the New Testament, and taught by the most eminent Fathers, it cannot be said in truth that the Presbyterian polity took origin with him.

CLEMENT of Alexandria, we are told by Dr. Lightfoot, regarded the functions of bishop and presbyter "as substantially the same in kind, though differing in degree."[1] Most Presbyterians would say the same of their own Church at the present day.

HILARY, at a later date, sees no real distinction between them: "He is bishop, who is first among the presbyters."[2]

Nor can ÆRIUS, forming his opinion on the Scriptures. "What," says he, "is a bishop to a presbyter? The one in no respect differs from the other; their rank, honour, and reward are the same. A bishop ordains, so also does a presbyter. The bishop baptizes, so likewise the presbyter. The bishop conducts divine worship, so also does the presbyter. The bishop sits on a throne, so also does the presbyter."[3]

JEROME also adds the authority of his great name: "Bishops are superior to presbyters more by custom than by any appointment of the Lord."[4]

AUGUSTINE, himself a bishop, asks, "What is a bishop, unless first presbyter, that is, the highest priest?" And again, "It is owing to the practice of the Church that the episcopate is higher than the presbyterate."[5]

The essence of Presbyterianism is that all ordinary pastors are of one order, and that the bishop is above the presbyter only by human arrangement, not by divine right. That great principle is asserted by the above Fathers, all of whom lived

[1] See *Comment. on the Philippians*, p. 227.
[2] Comment on 1 Tim. iii. 10.
[3] Epiphanius, *Heresies*, lxxii.
[4] Comment on Titus i. 5.
[5] *Questions on Old and New Testaments, and Epistle* lxxxii. 33.

ages before Calvin, and affirmed it as clearly as anything could be affirmed. What sense or truth is there, then, in saying that the system originated with Calvin? All that Calvin did was what any true Reformer must do, recall the attention of Christians to the principles contained in the Scriptures, and attempt to restore the original institution from which the Church in his time had wandered away. The result of the attempt to restore the scriptural system, successful in many respects, but imperfect in a few, is what men now call Presbyterianism. Calvin, no doubt, made that attempt, to his great credit; but in so far as the system he restored is scriptural and true it is worthy of acceptance, not because it is Calvin's, but because it is divinely revealed.

We do not give the extracts now quoted from the Fathers as furnishing historical evidence for our system. That would be to fall into the ludicrous mistake of Bishop Wordsworth, who, in order to prove the divine origin of Prelacy, quotes the Council of Chalcedon and Fynes Clinton! No evidence is historical that is not contemporary, or as near to contemporary as can possibly be procured. The extracts, we know, are much too late to rank as evidence. They are only *opinions*. But the fact that men like Hilary, Jerome, and Augustine were of opinion, that a bishop even in their own time was superior to a presbyter more by custom and by Church arrangement than by any divine appointment, ought to relieve us from the charge that John Calvin was the first to perceive the human origin of Prelacy, and to originate a new system of Church government. His honour among the theologians of the Reformation is, that he was among the first to discern what God has revealed on that subject, and to make a vigorous effort to restore a system from which the Church ever since the second century had wandered away.

14. Jerome has said, and Hooker has repeated,[1] that the prelatic system has this advantage, that it sets up the bishop as a centre of unity and a remedy against schisms. If its claims to be a divine institution are renounced, we need not deny that it has some advantages, as any wisely-concocted scheme well administered might be always expected to have. But this does not justify the creation of such a device, nor its

[1] *Ecc. Polity*, vii. 5. 1, 2.

unauthorized introduction into the Church. There were divisions in the apostolic age, but the strange thing is that the apostles entirely overlooked such a remedy for them. Paul was surely a little remiss when he did not suggest it in his pathetic address to the elders of Ephesus, as a protection against the "grievous wolves" who, after his departure, were to ravage the flock (Acts xx. 29, 30). He knew that there were contentions at Corinth even in his own time (1 Cor. i. 11, 12); how strange that he never thought of this wise device, nor set up a prelate to keep the presbyters of Corinth and Achaia in order! He admits that "there must needs be heresies;" but it is very remarkable that he does not say there must needs be prelates, in order to stifle heresies when they appear.

But the condemnation of the institution is, that the invention utterly failed. It removed no heresy; it stimulated pride and ambition; it provoked to jealousy and strife; it developed into the Papacy, under which the Christian Church has groaned for a thousand years. If schisms among presbyters need a bishop to prevent them, schisms among bishops need a pope to correct them. Prelacy, as Smectymnuus well says, is "a stirrup for Antichrist to get into his saddle." There is strong reason to believe that Prelacy has produced more divisions than it ever healed.[1]

The fact is, that instead of diocesan Episcopacy preventing schism, every great and small division which has weakened or strengthened the Church since the third century, has been accomplished in very face of a Prelacy, which, if it did not cause the schism, was impotent to prevent it. Arianism grew up under the eye of Alexander, bishop of Alexandria. Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, gave his name to the heresy of Nestorius. The quarrels and jealousies of the bishops of Rome and Constantinople were the real cause of the separation of the Greek and Latin Churches. The ecclesiastical abuses,

[1] An example of this is furnished by the case of Valentine, the head of one of the Gnostic sects. Tertullian states of him that he "had expected to become a bishop, because he was an able man both in genius and eloquence. Being indignant, however, that another obtained the dignity by reason of a claim which confessorship had given him, he broke with the Church of the true faith." *Against the Valentinians*, chap. iv.

Such is the way that Episcopacy heals schism!

represented by the popes of the sixteenth century, produced Luther and Calvin. Anglicanism, notwithstanding a whole bench of bishops, has produced in little more than three centuries out of its own bosom Independency, Quakerism, Methodism, and the Plymouth Brethren—sects which, to say the least, are nearly as good as itself. Prelacy itself is a schism—in its standing apart from all the Reformed and Lutheran Churches on the Protestant side, and from the Western Church on the Catholic side. For these reasons we adopt the words of Tertullian—"Emulation of the episcopal office is the mother of schisms."[1]

"Mark," says John Milton, "whether this rare device of man's brain, thus preferred before the ordinance of God, had better success than fleshly wisdom not counselling with God is wont to have. So far was it from removing schism, that if schism parted the congregations before, now it rent and mangled, now it raged. Heresy begat heresy with a certain monstrous haste of pregnancy in her birth, at once born and bringing forth. Contentions, before brotherly, were now hostile. Men went to choose their bishop as they went to a pitched field, and the day of his election was, like the sacking of a city, sometimes ended with the blood of thousands."

Then he adds his opinion as to the best way of preventing schism:—

"Next, or rather before councils, the timeliest prevention of schism is to preach the gospel abundantly and powerfully throughout all the land, to instruct the youth religiously, to endeavour how the Scriptures may be easiest understood of all men; to all which the proceedings of these men have been on set purpose contrary. But how, O Prelates, should you remove schism? And how should you not remove and oppose all the means of removing schism? when prelacy is a schism itself from the most reformed and most flourishing of our neighbour Churches abroad, and a sad subject of discord and offence to the whole nation at home. The remedy which you allege is the very disease we groan under, and never can be to us a remedy but by removing itself."[2]

15. It is in itself a very significant fact, requiring explana-

[1] *On Baptism*, chap. xvii.

[2] Milton's "Reason of Church Government," in *Works*, vol. ii. pp. 461 and 466.

tion from Episcopal writers, that the ancient works which speak most directly and plainly in support of Prelacy are the forgeries and other spurious writings of antiquity. No real evidence for the system is to be found in the genuine literature of the second century. To Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Hermas, the author of the *Epistle to Diognetus*, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Clement of Alexandria, it looks in vain. The main support of it is to be found in the pseudo-Ignatius, the Clementine forgeries, and the spurious Apostolic Canons and Constitutions. "These heretical books," says Dr. Lightfoot, speaking of one of the Clementine homilies, "outstrip the most rigid orthodoxy in their zeal for the episcopal office."[1] The fact itself is suspicious. If Prelacy had been a divine institution set up in the Church by the apostles of Christ, there would have been no need to recommend it to the Church by forged documents issued in the name of Ignatius, or of Clement, or of Peter.

For these reasons the historical argument, to which Dr. Lightfoot attaches so much importance, fails to convince us that the prelatic system is apostolic in its origin. If it cannot be proved from the Bible, it is in vain to prove that it appeared in the Church very soon after the canon of Scripture was closed and the last apostle had disappeared. For the reasons stated, we are satisfied that it did not appear so soon as is supposed by those who regard Ignatius a sober pastor of the first quarter of the second century. Even were it otherwise, and if Prelacy existed in 110 A.D., it was at least a decade too late. Inspiration had died with the last of the apostles ten years before. An argument strictly analogous to that which we have now refuted might prove of no less force in favour of the Papacy. That out of the New Testament bishop the prelate developed, if not in the Ignatian age, at least in another century, is certain; but it is not more certain than that in due time the pope developed out of the prelate.

ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING THE PRELATIC ARGUMENT.

To some it seems mysterious why so many controversialists, whose ability and sincerity there is no good reason to doubt,

[1] *Comment. on Philippians*, p. 209.

have induced themselves to believe that there is any real weight in the prelatic argument. It is in part owing to a series of assumptions which they never question, proceed upon as if they were axioms, and hand down to each other as an heritage from generation to generation. These assumptions are not, we know, characteristic of every Episcopalian writer, nor do they underlie every part of the controversy; but they are so gross in themselves, and meet us so often in the controversy, that we must not omit to call special attention to some of them.

1. One of these assumptions is, that the terms used in the New Testament to denote Church officers do not mean what they express, but something different. We gather from one writer, for example, that when the New Testament writers speak of apostles he understands them to mean bishops, when they speak of bishops they mean priests, and when they speak of deacons they mean elders or pastors.[1] This may seem strange, but it is literally true. Nor is this style of interpretation limited, as one would expect, to the inferior clergy and pamphleteers. Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, the late Bishop of Lincoln, resorts to the same expedient. Speaking of the change in the office of the bishop, he says, "Henceforth then ἐπίσκοπος was applied to *an overlooker of many pastors*, having previously signified an overlooker of a single flock;" and he goes on to tell us that the expression in Phil. i. 1, ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις, "bishops and deacons," is "to be rendered priests and deacons."[2] According to this writer, the much abused word ἐπίσκοπος means a pastor, a priest, or a prelate, exactly as it suits the requirements of his argument. If it is permissible after this fashion to fix upon a word any meaning that an interpreter pleases, without regard to the laws of language or circumstances, there is nothing that could not be proved by such a species of hermeneutical legerdemain. Under the screw of such an interpretation, "Christ and His apostles" might be understood to mean the pope and his cardinals.

We deny the whole thing first and last. Every word has the meaning, and no other, which by the laws of language it is proved to have. The word apostle never means *bishop*,

[1] Porter, p. 90.

[2] *Theophilus Anglicanus*, p. 90.

the word bishop never means *priest*, and the word deacon in its official sense never means *pastor*. Of course any officer in the Church may, if necessary, perform the duties of any officer under him in rank; but the term applied to one office does not express the same idea as that which belongs to the other. A general in the army may in the heat of the battle fight in the ranks like a common soldier; but that does not prove that the word *general* means *a soldier*. Each word has a meaning peculiarly its own, even when they refer to the same individual. But, as Clement of Alexandria said many hundred years ago—"The truth is not found by changing the meaning, for *so people subvert all true teaching.*"[1]

2. That the words ἐπίσκοπος (bishop) and πρεσβύτερος (presbyter), though not strictly synonymous, were in the first century only different names for the same Church officer, all writers now admit. But when we come to the second century, all prelatic writers assume, or appear to assume, without offering any proof, that the bishop of the second century is not, like the first, a presbyter in charge of a congregation, but a bishop in the modern sense of the word, that is, a prelate. Bishop Lightfoot supplies a striking illustration of this. He says distinctly, "It is a fact now generally recognised by theologians of all shades of opinion, that in the language of the New Testament the same officer in the Church is called indifferently bishop and elder or presbyter."[2] But when the word bishop is used by a writer of the second century, the same learned writer always takes for granted that it means a prelate or bishop in the modern sense. He assigns no reason for this. This assumption lies at the basis of the historical argument on which he builds so much. Only grant to him, that every bishop whom he finds named as existing in the second century was a diocesan, and he will prove to you, and that without fail, that Prelacy is as old as the Apostle John, or very nearly so. The same assumption is also found in the passage quoted a few moments ago from the Bishop of Lincoln. His namesake of St. Andrews follows in the same track. "We know," says he, "that in the time of Tertullian the title of bishop meant a *prelatical bishop* and nothing else."[3] He assigns no reasons; he gives his readers no means

[1] *Stromata*, vii. 16. [2] *Comment. on Philippians*, p. 93. [3] *Outlines*, p. 30.

of judging about the truth of what he says he knows; they must take his word for a matter which, if not supported by evidence, ruins his argument.

But we need not feel surprise at anything Bishop Wordsworth says, considering the extraordinary rule of translation which he adopts; a rule which we venture to say will excite the astonishment of any scholar who may turn his attention to it. Speaking of the words ἐπίσκοπος, πρεσβύτερος, and διάκονος, he makes this remark:—

"In order to translate them properly, inasmuch as we can derive no theory from their employment in the New Testament, we *must take our theory with us* (which has been derived, not from names, but facts), and apply it in the best way we can, translating at one time *strictly and definitely* according to modern use, at another time *laxly and indiscriminately*, according to ancient use."[1]

No more erroneous and deceptive rule of translation was ever adopted. We are not, it seems, to take the terms of the New Testament, ascertain their exact and proper meaning from the best available sources, and build our system on the facts thus ascertained; for he says, "We can derive no theory from their employment in the New Testament." But we are to "take our theory with us"—that is, as we understand him, we are to take our theory of government from existing facts in the Church, and then go to Scripture in search of something to support a theory formed outside Scripture and independent of Scripture—"we must take our theory with us, and apply it in the best way we can." Again Dr. Wordsworth, for no doubt he follows his own rule, translates in an arbitrary manner, at one time "strictly and definitely," at another "laxly and indiscriminately." By this method he can modify Scripture and history to suit the exigencies of any theory or of any system that he chooses to adopt. By this mode of interpretation the word ἐπίσκοπος (bishop) in the New Testament means *presbyter* or elder, for there we translate "strictly and definitely;" but the same word forty or fifty years after means a diocesan or a prelate, for now we must translate "laxly and indiscriminately." But why this change in the mode of translation? None that we can imagine,

[1] *Outlines*, p. 150.

except that the theory, which Bishop Wordsworth "takes with him" to the interpretation of language, requires it so to be.

It will thus be seen that the historical argument turns entirely on the question what was the bishop of the second century. Was he simply the first presbyter in the local Church, who presided among his colleagues and in meetings of the Church for worship? That is the view taken by us in common with all the genuine literature which has come down to us from that century. No clear case to the contrary has ever been made out even from the writings of Ignatius. What Ignatius even if genuine does, is simply to make the distinction between bishop and presbyter a little wider, and to date it a little earlier than we think is required by historic truth. The bishop, who rules over various Churches and various pastors, dates from the third century, not from the second—from the time when the mother Church in the large city provides accommodation for the overflowing number of its members, by forming suburban and village Churches. The literature of the second century, we hold to be on the Presbyterian side. Presbyterianism has the true bishop, the true episcopal ordination, the true apostolic succession, the true commission, and the true ministry. The prelate or diocesan bishop is not a divine creation, but a human growth, an ecclesiastical accretion, an unhealthy development which takes distinctive shape in the third century, and still more so in the fourth and fifth. The prelate was born in the third century, gained strength in the fourth, made himself troublesome from the fifth and onward, and was cast with disgrace out of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches in the sixteenth. So we say, and believe.

But, on the other side, it is assumed that when Christ commissioned the apostles, He commissioned bishops; that when an apostle sent an evangelist to labour in a city or district, the very fact that the evangelist is named in connection with a locality proves him to be a bishop; and that in the uninspired literature when a bishop is mentioned in connection with any place, he must of necessity be a diocesan. Such assumptions are as old as Eusebius, and have made their way into the traditional postscripts attached without authority to the apostolic Epistles in the Authorized Version of the

English Testament. But this assumption we repudiate. We deny the assumption to be legitimate. Until diocesan Episcopacy is first proved to be a historical fact, it must not be taken for granted; and as a historical fact it is not in existence till the third century. Cyprian is the first bishop in whom we detect the unmistakeable features of the prelate.

3. Perhaps it is not so much an assumption as it is ignorance of the true nature of historical evidence, to represent writers who are unexceptionable authority for events of their own time, as equal authority for disputed facts of a time two or three centuries anterior to their own. Polemical writers, conscious of weakness on the field of Scripture, are strongly tempted in this direction, and too often yield to the temptation. Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries, whose only conception of a bishop is the prelate into whom the bishop has grown, are regarded by them as affording conclusive authority for the position and functions of the bishop in the second century. "It is the conception of a later age," says Dr. Lightfoot, "which represents Timothy as bishop of Ephesus, and Titus as bishop of Crete."[1] Yet that is the statement of Eusebius. The same historian also represents Linus as the first bishop of the Roman Church after the apostles; and Dionysius the Areopagite, the first bishop of Athens.[2] If in such statements we are to understand the term bishop in the sense of prelate, then Eusebius imports into the old name the conception of his own age. He conveys into the term the new ideas of diocesan superintendence, exclusive jurisdiction in ordination, and primary jurisdiction in confirmation and consecration, which ideas nobody attempts to show belonged to it in the first or second century. He wrote about the affairs of the second century in the language of the fourth, and thus unconsciously imported into his statement "the conception of a later age."

Mr. Litton has pointed out a good example of this kind of comment from Chrysostom. Speaking of 1 Tim. iv. 14, where Timothy is mentioned as having the gift given him "with the laying on of *the hands of the presbytery*," Chrysostom says of the Apostle Paul: "He does not speak here of presbyters, but of bishops; for presbyters did not ordain

[1] *Comment. on Philippians*, p. 197. [2] *Ecc. Hist.* iii. 4.

the bishop." "An instance," says Litton, "of a mode of scriptural interpretation very common with divines. Because in his time presbyters could not, by the rule of the Church, ordain, Chrysostom argues that so it must have been in the first age of the Church." [1]

The strange thing, however, is that such statements of Eusebius, Chrysostom, and others, in regard to matters of which they personally knew nothing, and in regard to which they were without inspiration to guide them, are constantly cited by Bishop Wordsworth and other controversialists, not as *opinions*, be it observed, but as *evidence* which they think ought to guide after times in determining the functions and position of a bishop in the second century. No person acquainted with what historical evidence really is, can attach importance to the statements of any writer, however distinguished in other respects, who did not live near enough the time to enable him to speak on a disputed point from his personal knowledge; and still less so in the present instance, when, as we maintain, the Scriptures and the contemporary literature of the second century give an entirely different view of the matter.

4. That the word *ecclesia*, which in the New Testament when applied locally always means a congregation, in the second century always means a group of Churches constituting a diocese, is another modern conception constantly assumed as a fact in this controversy. Were this not assumed, the bishop of the second century would be the pastor of only one Church, and the parish be the sphere of his labours. The *ecclesia* or Church, it has to be assumed, consists of more congregations than one, else the embryo bishop is left without a diocese. Now, this ought never to be assumed; it ought to be proved. There is no force in the historical argument for Prelacy, except it is shown that the bishop of the second century presided over a number of pastors, each provided with a flock, and that the *παροικία*, or sphere in which he ministered, contained various congregations. One or two clear cases of this kind, if they really existed in the second century, ought to be pointed out; after this is done, it can then be made use of as an actual fact, and reasoned upon. Till this

[1] Litton's *Church of Christ*, p. 568.

is done we are fully justified in maintaining that the Church of the second century was like that of the first—a congregation habitually meeting together in the same place for purposes of worship. Even in the Ignatian Epistles, which are written to magnify the episcopal office, the bishop whom they exalt is the pastor of a single congregation.

5. Another common assumption is, that the Episcopal Church system as it stands at present is scriptural and right, therefore any system whatever differing from it must be unscriptural and wrong. It may not always be stated in terms so broad as these, or indeed stated at all, but the idea underlies the reasoning of many Episcopalian writers, that the constitution of the Church of later times is to govern our idea of what it was in the apostolic age. It is not unusual for others as well as Bishop Wordsworth, according to the extract already quoted, to "take their theory with them," then go to the New Testament and translate accordingly. This is what we may call—bending the rule to the crooked stick.

The modes by which this is done are various. One begins at the Reformation, when in the unreformed Church he finds Episcopacy in full flower, and then traces it back until he finds to his satisfaction that exactly the same system existed in the time of the apostles. Another takes his ideal of bishop from the age of Constantine, when State authority has given rank and dignity to the office. Another begins at the close of the apostolic age, and, crab-like, works his way backwards to the beginning of things. Having thus gathered, from sources outside of the Scriptures, an idea of what he regards the true bishop,—that is, the diocesan,—he goes to Scripture to find how it may be used to support his conception, and then concludes to his own satisfaction that the bishop of later times was the bishop of Peter and Paul. To this practice Bishop Lightfoot, Dr. Jacob, and Mr. Litton present in their writings a striking and delightful contrast. But Mr. Haddan, Bishop Wordsworth, and many others begin in this way at the wrong end. Against this unfair method of proof it would seem that Dr. Stillingfleet has warned his brethren in vain;[1] and Mr. Hatch tells them distinctly that "it is not

[1] *Irenicum*, chap. vi. p. 237.

sound to reason from the functions of bishops in the third and fourth centuries to their functions in the first."[1]

6. Another assumption is, that the magnitude of a diocese is a matter of no importance in determining the position and duties of a bishop. If he preside over six presbyters, and has charge of a single Church, it is with these writers all the same in principle as if he ruled six hundred presbyters and six hundred congregations or Churches. The extent of his charge is nothing. If that is true, we do not see on what ground these writers could deny that the pastor of a single Church, with his presbyters, is a real bishop. The extent of a charge may entirely alter the duties which the ruler of it has to perform. Both may be officers, but the captain of a troop is charged with different duties from those of the colonel of a regiment.

We have had to notice various illustrations of these assumptions in the course of the discussion; but we have thought it right to bring them together, that the reader may be able to see how much has to be taken for granted before an argument for diocesan Episcopacy can be founded on the word of God. The fact of such assumptions is enough, when detected, to shake the reader's confidence in the most plausible reasoning.

[1] Smith and Cheetham's *Antiquities*, p. 1792.

CHAPTER VI.—APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.

No one acquainted with history is likely to deny that the Christian Church, in a condition more or less pure, has existed in the world since the great Pentecost recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and that one generation of Christian ministers has succeeded another since the fishermen of Galilee became "fishers of men." It is no less true that every generation of ministers has, with few exceptions, been formally invested with office by others who held the office before them. It is alike scriptural and becoming, that those about to take upon them the important charge of feeding the flock and of watching for the souls of men, should be duly and publicly set apart to office by those who have authority to do so. The rite of ordination is still maintained in every important section of the Church visible, many thinking it right to conform to the precedent presented in Scripture, and some thinking that without it the continued existence of the Church could not be maintained. It is natural in itself, as well as desirable for other reasons, that those who themselves teach what is right and true should be satisfied that the same sound principles are held by their successors, and that they should communicate to them that public designation and sanction which they themselves derived from their predecessors. But the most solemn appointment derived from human hands does not enable a minister to dispense with that inward call which comes from God. Church officers, whose one object is to perform the duties of their office and to be useful, will not, so far as the manner of appointment is concerned, trouble themselves with more than this, that they have received the inward call, and have been set apart to office in accordance with the forms adopted by the section of the Church universal to which they belong.

THE NATURE OF THE DOCTRINE.

If apostolic succession meant no more than this, there would be no great difference of opinion among Christian people on the matter. But, as explained by those who believe it, the doctrine means much more. Resolved into its parts, it means that authority to teach and to administer the sacraments can, according to the constitutional code of Christianity, be given by one class of officers only, namely, diocesan bishops; that these bishops have power to communicate the grace of the Holy Ghost as well as the office of the holy ministry to those whom they ordain; that this gift of the Holy Ghost is communicated in the act of ordination; that the commission to teach, with the accompanying gift, has been handed down from the apostles of Christ to the present clergy of the Greek, Roman, and Anglican Churches in an uninterrupted series of ordinations; that where the line of episcopal ordination is broken there is no valid ministry; and that where there is no valid ministry there is no Church, and where there is no Church there is in ordinary circumstances no salvation.

This is the doctrine of Apostolic Succession, as we understand it; but it is possible that some may take exception to our statement of it, and it is only fair to allow those who believe it to explain it in their own words.

Arthur W. Haddan, B.D.:—"The doctrine of apostolical succession means, that according to the institution of Christ, a ministry ordained in due form by episcopal succession from the apostles, and so from our Lord Himself, is an integral part of that visible Church of Christ upon earth to which Christian men are to be joined. It implies, further, that the ministry so ordained is not a merely external office of convenience and of outward government, but involves also the transmission of special gifts of grace, in order to the carrying on in the Church of the supernatural work of Christ by His spirit.

". . . It . . . is actually part of the doctrine as held by the Church, that a supernatural work should need a supernatural sanction, and that what is rightly held to be the grace of orders, and not a merely outward appointment, should be transmitted by those only who have themselves received that

grace and the authority to transmit it from its one original source." [1]

DEAN HOOK:—"A perfect and unbroken transmission of the original ministerial commission from the apostles to their successors, by the progressive and perpetual conveyance of their powers from one race of bishops to another." [2]

THE TRACTS FOR THE TIMES:—"Through the bishop who ordained us we received the Holy Ghost, the power to bind and to loose, to administer the sacraments and to preach. . . . He could not give what he had never received."—No. 1.

"That our present bishops are the heirs and representatives of the apostles by successive transmission of the prerogative of being so; this is too notorious to require proof. Every link in the chain is known from St. Peter to our present metropolitans."—No. 7.

PALMER [3]:—"The bishops who rule the Churches of these realms were validly ordained by others, who by means of an unbroken spiritual descent of ordinations derived their missions from the apostles and from our Lord. This continual descent is evident to any one who chooses to investigate it. Let him read the catalogue of our bishops ascending up to the most remote period. Our ordinations descend in a direct unbroken line from Peter and Paul, the apostles of the circumcision and the Gentiles. These great apostles successively ordained Linus, Cletus, and Clement bishops of Rome; and the apostolical line of succession was regularly continued from them to Celestine, Gregory, and Vitalianus, who ordained Patrick bishop for the Irish,[4] and Augustine and Theodore for the English. And from those times an uninterrupted series of valid ordinations has carried down the apostolical succession in our Churches even to the present day. There is not a

[1] *Apostolical Succession in the Church of England*, chap. i.

[2] *Church Dictionary*, article "Succession."

[3] This passage, which I quote from Palmer's *Origines Liturgicæ*, chap. xii. sec. 1, seems a favourite with Successionists. I find it inserted in *The Book of Common Prayer, with Notes, Legal and Historical*, by Archibald John Stephens, vol. iii. p. 2067; and a popular treatise, Powell on *Apostolical Succession*, at p. 7, quotes it from Dr. Hook. Which of the three is the real author, and who are the two plagiarists, I do not profess to determine. Hook's *Sermons* I have not seen; but Palmer and Stephens both give the passage as their own.

[4] Of this statement there is no historical evidence whatever.

bishop, priest or deacon among us, who cannot, if he pleases, trace his own spiritual descent from Saint Peter and Saint Paul."

"No community which is without the succession can be a Church of Christ."[1]

The doctrine thus stated involves the following particulars:—

1. The apostles handed over their divine commission to prelates, that is, to diocesan bishops only, and none except such bishops have any authority to ordain.

2. That there has been, from apostolic times till the present, an uninterrupted succession of such bishops, themselves validly ordained, and who have validly ordained others.

3. That such bishops, with the laying on of hands, communicate the grace of the Holy Spirit and power to forgive sins along with the office of the priesthood.

4. That where this line of prelatic ordinations has been broken owing to any cause, there can be no valid ministry, no valid ordinance, no Church of Christ, and no salvation.

That these extravagant opinions cannot fairly be laid at the door of the Anglican Church as a body, is, we think, clear from the fact, that the apostolical succession is not taught in the Thirty-nine Articles; that by the Act of 1570 (13th Elizabeth, chap. 12) ministers not ordained by prelates were at one time admitted to preferment merely on subscribing the Articles; that the "judicious" Hooker says, "there may be sometimes very just and sufficient reasons to allow ordination made without a bishop;"[2] that the modern practice of insisting on the episcopal ordination of persons possessing only presbyterial orders, implies the necessity of Prelacy as a form of Church order, but not the communication of grace, or the necessity of connection with the apostles by an unbroken line of episcopal ordination; and that many of the ablest and best people of the English Church repudiate the whole thing as a Romish invention. But that some members—and as some believe, a growing minority in that community—hold this doctrine, there can be little doubt. They plead in justification of their opinions, that the Ordinal, a document approved in the 36th Article and in the 36th Canon, and subscribed by

[1] Palmer, *On the Church*, Part i. chap. viii. p. 143.

[2] *Ecc. Polity*, vii. 14.

all the clergy, asserts the apostolic origin of the Threefold Ministry and the necessity of Episcopal Ordination, and they appeal to the language used by the bishop in the ordination service, who professes to give the candidate "the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, and to confer upon him power to forgive sins." Admitting this plea, however, it only proves that the English Church claims for her own clergy high position and privileges, but does not pronounce that these privileges are conditioned on an uninterrupted series of ordinations, or that the ministers of other Churches are for want of them no longer a valid ministry.

While, therefore, we do not see that there is anything in the doctrinal symbols of the Anglican Church which necessarily ties down the clergyman who subscribes them to believe the full doctrine of the apostolic succession, still we must not shut our eyes to these three facts:—

1. That the statements of the Ordinal and Prayer-book affirm that since the apostolic age there has been a threefold ministry, consisting of bishops, priests, and deacons; that ordination by a bishop is essential to a clergyman in the Anglican Church; and that the bishop claims to bestow by the imposition of his hands in ordination the Holy Ghost, and power to forgive and to retain sins.

2. That High Churchmen so well informed as Dean Hook and Mr. Haddan say that apostolic succession is a doctrine universally received, and has been at all times the doctrine of the English Church.[1]

3. That, as a matter of fact not to be denied, many Anglican divines and ministers profess the doctrine of apostolic succession as a part of their belief.

These facts, not to speak of any other, are sufficient to entitle it to very serious consideration. If the doctrine is not expressly asserted in the Anglican Standards, it is the

[1] Thus Dean Hook: "Such then is uninterrupted succession; *a fact to which every bishop, priest, and deacon in the wide world looks as the ground of validity in his orders.*" *Church Dictionary*, p. 727.

Mr. Haddan says it is one of his objects—"To point out that *it has been the doctrine of our own Church at all times*, both in its formularies and in its dealings with other Christian bodies, down to the Lambeth Pastoral of 1867." *Apostolical Succession*, chap. ii. p. 35.

inference which many think is implied in, and may legitimately be drawn from them.

OBJECTIONS TO THE DOCTRINE.

The objections to the doctrine of apostolic succession, as explained by those who believe it, are so numerous and solid as to bar our way completely to the acceptance of it. The principal of these objections we are now to notice.

1. *Its Want of Scriptural Basis.*

The one fatal objection to the principle is, that it is not taught in the word of God. The most intelligent of men, cut off from the Romish and Anglican teaching, might read the Bible industriously all their lives without discovering this doctrine. It is certainly not on the surface; nor is it to be found were we to dig ever so deep. Even the passages pressed into its support have to be understood in an unnatural and forced sense, before any help can be derived from them. What they prove is not the doctrine, but something else entirely apart from the doctrine, and which barely touches a fringe of the subject. The passages most frequently cited in support of apostolic succession are the following:—

Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.—Matt. xxviii. 18–20.

Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so I send you.—John xx. 21.

The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.—2 Tim. ii. 2.

He would be an ingenious interpreter indeed who, except, like Bishop Wordsworth, he "bring his theory with him," could extract it out of these words.

It is true, no doubt, that Jesus closes the apostolic commission by saying, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the

end of the world." It is not necessary, in order to the fulfilment of this promise, that the apostles should live till the end of time. We know they died. But their writings live; the gospel preached by them still lives; the testimony borne by them still lives, and Christian ministers now only repeat that testimony; the work which they set on foot still goes forward. When God blesses their writings contained in the Scriptures, their testimony, their gospel, their work, to the conversion of men and to the evangelization of nations, the promise is abundantly fulfilled. But even if we understand the promise in the sense of "with you and your successors," this, if it prove anything, is an argument founded, not on the text, but on a word introduced from without, and which is not supplied by inspiration. Besides, it opens up the very broad question, Who are the successors? Are they prelates, or presbyters, or deacons? Were they succeeded by apostles like themselves, or by ordinary ministers of the gospel: and if the latter, then by what ordinary ministers? This opens up an element of uncertainty which must weaken any support that the text is supposed to give to the doctrine of apostolic succession.

Nor can the promise be dissociated from the work to which it is attached. That work is preaching the gospel, teaching the nations, making disciples of them by baptism and instruction. The successors of the apostles are evangelists and missionaries, rather than prelates, who are tied down to defined localities, called dioceses, and who may occasionally, as their pleasure is, preach and baptize, but whose distinctive work is rather to rule the pastors within their jurisdiction, and to ordain, confirm, or to consecrate. Judging from the work prescribed to those to whom the promise was originally given for their encouragement, their successors are ministers or presbyters, not prelates. The evangelist with the world before him as his field of labour, has much the clearest title to the promise; but the very last who seems entitled to put in a claim is the modern bishop, whose mission is not to the world, but to a diocese, who rules over a community of pastors and Churches professing to be already evangelized, and who, except on special occasions, never preaches nor baptizes.

The passage, however, never names "successors." From it we could not learn whether the apostles were to have any successors, and still less who these successors were to be. To found the doctrine on such a passage is to build on sand. On any mere inference so unnecessary, so far-fetched, and so feeble, Christ and His apostles rested no doctrine, and certainly not a doctrine so wide and far-reaching in its effects as apostolic succession.

The words cited were addressed by the Lord in the first instance to the apostles, but through them to all Christian ministers and to all Christian people. The eleven were the only ministers of Christianity then appointed. It sets before them and the Church of God in all time the grand work of evangelizing the world; it prescribes the means by which this is to be done—preaching the gospel, religious instruction, the administration of baptism; it encourages them to the performance of the work by a promise of Christ's constant presence. A similar promise had been already given to any two or three Christian people who meet in His name (Matt. xviii. 20). The commission promises Christ's presence to the apostles who take part in the great work of the conversion of the nations; and now that the original receivers have long ago passed away, the missionary and preacher who, with the writings of the apostles in his hand, and their message in his mouth, goes forth repeating their testimony, sowing like precious seed, and earnestly seeking the salvation of souls, is the true heir of the promise, and has the best right to claim its fulfilment.

The passage John xx. 21 is also quoted in favour of the succession. It proves, indeed, that the Father sent Jesus, and that in a similar manner Jesus sent the apostles; but it proves no more. Nobody doubts that the Son, in working out human redemption, came into the world as the commissioned servant of the Father, and that the apostles, when planting Christianity in the world, acted as the commissioned servants of the Son. The latter were sent by Jesus exactly as Jesus was sent by God the Father. No Christian doubts what the text affirms, namely, the divine mission of both.

But there is in this no proof of the divine mission of prelates. Before this can be made out, there needs to be

tacked on to the text something which does not belong to it, such as—"and I give you the power of sending prelates with a divine commission, who, in like manner, shall have the power of sending others, and so on even unto the end."[1] But, be it observed, the proof is not in the text, but in the words tacked on to the text, and which are no part of divine revelation. Then who are the "others" whom the apostles sent? Not certainly diocesan bishops—Church officers not known in New Testament times, but, as we learn from 2 Tim. ii. 2, "faithful men;" and it will scarcely be maintained that prelates and "faithful men" are exact synonyms for each other.

The argument would be strong if the text said that Christ sent diocesan bishops. But it was apostles whom He sent, and it was to them that He addressed the word—"Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The words were proper in His mouth, for He had a right to use them, and power to bestow the gift. The Holy Ghost in His extraordinary gifts was virtually conferred at that moment, though not actually until some time after. Scripture furnishes no ground for thinking that the apostles used that word—"Receive ye the Holy Ghost," expressive of supreme supernatural power, in the ordination of Church officers. It is a form of speech peculiarly objectionable on the lips of those who have no supernatural power in reserve, and who cannot make good the gift which they profess to confer. A prelate may, like any other man, use the form of words, but there his power ends. In so doing he professes presumptuously to exercise a power which he knows in his heart that he does not possess. He might as rationally attempt to imitate Jesus in walking on the water, or in fasting forty days, or in blasting the fig-tree with a word, or in saying to the storm, "Peace, be still," or in calling at the grave's mouth to the dead man, "Come forth." To say to any man, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," is on the part of any ordinary minister an assumption of power which is very serious, and when repeated and repeated without any spiritual result so far as human eye can see, seems little short of mockery, however well intended it may be. It is at the least an exhibition of ecclesiastical feebleness not tending to edification.

[1] *Tracts for the Times*, No. 15.

Mr. Haddan states that the language, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," was not as a direct form used even in the Romish Church till late in the twelfth century; but from that Church the innovation passed over into the English Ordinal, and holds its place in the ordination service at the present hour.[1] This is a suggestive comment on the boasted antiquity of the ritual of the Anglican Church, many of whose members accept Romish innovations of yesterday as antique forms handed down from the days of the apostles. Some indeed explain away the objectionable words, by saying that they mean no more than authoritative power to preach the gospel.[2] But if that is the only meaning, why should not that be said? If the design is merely to give authority to preach the gospel, where is the wisdom in using words which, interpreted naturally, mean very much more?

The words of Paul to Timothy in the 2nd Epistle, ii. 2, do not afford any support for the apostolic succession. The injunction gives authority for continuing a faithful ministry in the Church, but not for an uninterrupted series of prelatical ordinations. Let it be noted carefully that the class of men whom Timothy was instructed to employ in the service of God was "faithful men"—men sound in the faith, and able and willing to instruct the people; and that what he was to commit to them was not the Holy Ghost, nor episcopal grace, whatever that may be, nor the grace of orders, nor grace of any kind, but the things which in presence of many witnesses he himself had heard from Paul. It was the truths of the gospel which Timothy in presence of many had heard from Paul; and it was these truths that he was to entrust to the teachers whom he was to appoint in the Church. He thus provides for a succession of teachers of the gospel salvation, but not for a succession of prelates; for the perpetuation and propagation of truth by the ministry of "faithful men," but not for an uninterrupted succession of prelatical ordinations. The latter idea has by some means to be imported into the text, before any spiritual chemistry or ecclesiastical pressure can extract from it an argument for the apostolic succession.

Timothy was to commit to others what he had heard from Paul, that they might, as faithful men, be able to teach others.

[1] *Apostolical Succession*, p. 250. [2] Stillingfleet, *Irenicum*, p. 231.

It seems obvious enough, therefore, that the apostle has not in view a long line of prelates, each of whom having himself received a canonical ordination might be able to transmit episcopal grace to his successors, and whose main function is to rule Churches and ordain pastors; what he has in view is a faithful gospel ministry, who, themselves instructed in the truth taught by the apostle, may be able to instruct others. Timothy is to provide a supply of presbyters, not a supply of prelates. It is the elders who, according to 1 Tim. iii., were required to be "apt to teach," and of whom teaching and rule are equally distinctive marks. The fact that Timothy, by Paul's directions, was to commit the truth to those who should teach it faithfully, whatever it may prove for the succession of presbyters, says little for the succession of prelates. Timothy, as already shown, was no prelate, only an evangelist delegated with apostolic powers for a temporary occasion. Nor were the elders of Ephesus, whom he was sent to aid in the reorganization of the Church, prelates; they were only congregational bishops, men who, like their predecessors a few years before (Acts xx. 35), may have laboured at their trades, as Paul himself did in order to support himself and others.

The three passages of the New Testament now commented upon, are those usually quoted in favour of the doctrine of the apostolic succession. Let the reader understand them in the widest sense that the words fairly interpreted will admit, and he cannot fail to be struck by the fact, that the main elements embodied in the doctrine derive from the texts no support whatever. The strongest opponent of it will cordially receive all that the passages affirm, and yet be as strong in his opposition as before. Nobody denies that Christ with His presence and blessing follows, not only the apostles, but all true ministers who do apostolic work and speak apostolic words, till the end of time; but there is nothing in this peculiar to the apostolic succession. Nobody denies that as God sent Christ, so Christ sent the apostles; but we do not think that this says anything about prelates. Nobody denies that the apostles themselves appointed and directed Timothy to appoint faithful men to do Christ's work; but it is not required by the text to believe, that either Timothy himself or

those whom he appointed were diocesan bishops. All Christians admit, we think, what the texts clearly and directly affirm; what we do not admit are the notions, not expressed by the words, but imported from without, with the view of forcing them to bear witness to an unscriptural dogma. Not one of these texts, nor any other in the Bible, teaches that the apostles appointed prelates to succeed them in their office and dignity; or that diocesan bishops are the transmitters of the Holy Ghost, or the sole transmitters of the ministerial office; or that the imposition of a prelate's hands is essential to a valid ordination; or that a man's title to the ministry is not clear, except he can track his commission up through an unbroken line of such ordinations to the apostles of Christ; or that apart from the ordinances administered by persons prelatically ordained, there is no salvation. There is therefore very much in the doctrine, that is not to be found in the texts cited in support of it. All this remains unproved, and what remains unproved by the word of God cannot command the acceptance of any intelligent Christian.

Practically there is no limit to the absurdities that a man may believe, if he start on the principle that the only infallible teacher is the Church—that vague indefinite thing, which, as used in ordinary speech, may be his own Church, or the Church of somebody else, or all Churches combined. But it is not easy to understand how any man, who regards God speaking through His word as the only guide in religion, can believe in the validity of no ordination except that administered by prelates, the official transmission of grace, or uninterrupted descent of canonical orders, and can induce himself to think that no ordinances except those administered by ministers prelatically ordained are valid for salvation,—all of which notions are embodied in the doctrine of apostolic succession, but not one of which is to be found in anything that Scripture tells us of the Christian ministry.

Some honest advocates of the doctrine admit candidly that it is not taught in the Holy Scriptures. Bishop Law, for example, says:—

"As to its not being mentioned in Scripture, the doctrine upon which it is founded plainly made it unnecessary to mention it." [1]

[1] Cited in Haddan, *Apostolic Succession*, p. 321.

Were the alleged facts which constitute the doctrine taught in the Bible, it would not signify much whether the name is mentioned there or not; but what we believe is, that the so-called facts are not found in the word of God, either by express statement or even by implication. Nothing could show more clearly that it constitutes no part of Christianity, but is a cunningly invented contrivance of after times. Priests may continue to teach people to believe in an uninterrupted succession of prelatical ordinations for 1900 years, and that the validity of ordinances depends on their being administered by persons prelatically ordained; but the Bible holds out no promise to that effect, nor does history confirm the allegation. The faith, therefore, which rests neither on a divine promise nor on the clear evidence of fact, is a faith that has no sound foundation whatever.

2. *The Succession mentioned by the Early Fathers is not Apostolic Succession.*

Some of the early Christian writers, in their controversy with the heretics of their time, speak of the ministerial succession in Churches planted by the apostles as furnishing evidence that Christians, at the time when they were writing, held substantially the same doctrine that the apostles taught. Their use of the word *succession* in this connection is eagerly seized upon by those who advocate *apostolic succession*, with the view of making it appear that the two successions are identical, and that their favourite doctrine is supported by antiquity. But that the two successions are entirely different in their nature, will be evident upon a careful examination of the passages in the Fathers to which we refer. These are:—

Hegesippus (A.D. 180).—After coming to Rome I made my stay with Anicetus, whose deacon was Eleutherus. After Anicetus, Soter succeeded, and after him Eleutherus. *In every succession*, however, and *in every city*, the *doctrine prevails according to what is declared by the law and the prophets and the Lord.*—In Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* iv. 22.

Irenæus (182–185 A.D.). — Again, when we refer them to that tradition which originates from the apostles, which is preserved by means *of the succession of presbyters in the Churches*, they [the

heretics] object to tradition, saying that they themselves are wiser, not merely than the presbyters, but even than the apostles, because they have discovered the unadulterated truth.—*Hær.* iii. 3. 2.

The blessed apostles, then, having founded and built up the Church [at Rome], committed unto the hands of Linus the office of the episcopate. Of this Linus, Paul makes mention in the Epistles to Timothy. To him succeeded Anacletus; and after him, in the third place from the apostles, Clement was allotted the bishopric. This man, as he had seen the blessed apostles, and had been conversant with them, might be said to have the preaching of the apostles still echoing [in his ears], and their traditions before his eyes. . . . To this Clement there succeeded Evaristus. Alexander followed Evaristus; then, sixth from the apostles, Sixtus was appointed; after him Telesphorus, who was gloriously martyred; then Hyginus; after him Pius; then after him Anicetus. Soter having succeeded Anicetus, Eleutherius does now, in the twelfth place from the apostles, hold the inheritance of the episcopate. In this order, and *by this succession, the ecclesiastical tradition from the apostles and the preaching of the truth have come down to us.* And this is most abundant proof that there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the Church from the apostles till now, and handed down in truth.—*Hær.* iii. 3. 3.

Wherefore it is incumbent *to obey the presbyters who are in the Church, those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles; those who, together with the succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift of truth*, according to the good pleasure of the Father; but to hold in suspicion others who depart from the primitive succession and assemble themselves together in any place whatsoever, either as heretics of perverse minds, or as schismatics puffed up and self-pleasing, or again, as hypocrites, acting thus for the sake of lucre and vainglory. For all these have fallen from the truth.—*Hær.* iv. 26. 2.

Such presbyters does the Church nourish, of whom also the prophet says, "I will give thy rulers in peace, and thy bishops in righteousness." . . . Where, therefore, the gifts of the Lord have been placed, there *it behoves us to learn the truth* [namely] *from those who possess that succession of the Church which is from the apostles*, and among whom exists that which is sound and blameless in conduct, as well as that which is unadulterated and incorrupt in speech. For these also preserve this faith of ours in one God who created all things, and they increase that love for the Son of God who accomplished such marvellous dispensations for our sake; and they expound the Scriptures to us without danger, neither blaspheming God, nor

dishonouring the patriarchs, nor despising the prophets.—*Hær.* iii. 26. 5.

True knowledge is [that which consists in] the doctrine of the apostles, and the ancient constitution of the Church throughout all the world, and the distinctive manifestation of the body of Christ according *to the successions of the bishops, by which they have handed down that Church which exists in every place*, and has come even unto us, being guarded and preserved, without any forging of Scriptures, by a very complete system of doctrine, and neither receiving addition nor curtailment; and in reading without falsification, and a lawful and diligent exposition in harmony with the Scriptures, both without danger and without blasphemy; and in the pre-eminent gift of love, which is more precious than knowledge, more glorious than prophecy, and which excels all the other gifts.—*Hær.* iv. 33. 8.

Tertullian (190–220).—But if there be any [heresies] which are bold enough to plant themselves in the midst of the apostolic age, that they may thereby seem to have been handed down by the apostles, we can say: Let them produce the original records of their Churches; let them unfold the roll of their bishops, running down in due succession from the beginning in such a manner that their first distinguished bishop shall be able to show for his ordainer and predecessor some one of the apostles, or of apostolic men, a man, moreover, who continued stedfast with the apostles. For this is the manner in which the apostolic Churches transmit their registers; as the Church of Smyrna, which records that Polycarp was placed therein by John; as also the Church of Rome, which makes Clement to have been ordained in like manner by Peter. In exactly the same way the other Churches likewise exhibit [their several worthies], whom, as having been appointed to their episcopal places by apostles, they regard as transmitters of the apostolic seed. . . . To this test, therefore, will they be challenged by those Churches who, although they derive not their founder from apostles or apostolic men (as being of much later date, for they are in fact being founded daily), yet since they agree in the same faith, they are accounted not less apostolic because they are akin in doctrine. Then let all the heresies, when challenged by our Church to these two tests, offer their proof of how they deem themselves to be apostolic.—*De Præscrip.* 32.[1]

Let it be observed in connection with these extracts:—

1. That with Irenæus the succession of presbyters and

[1] See also chap. xxxvi. in *De Præscrip.*, where Tertullian speaks of the apostolic Churches, and uses them also in proof that the apostolic doctrine has been handed down untainted.

bishops is exactly the same thing. The first presbyter in any Church he seems to regard as its bishop.

2. The succession of presiding presbyters or bishops spoken of by him and Tertullian, is a mere chronological and historical succession. It is as if a Presbyterian antiquary were to give a catalogue of all the chief pastors who officiated in the cathedral of Geneva from the time of Calvin, or in St. Giles, Edinburgh, from the time of John Knox, and use this personal and historical succession as an argument to show that the doctrine taught there from the Reformation till now was substantially the same; and should do so without reference to manner of appointment, mode of ordination, transmission of grace, or validity of ministration. A bare chronological succession of this kind indicates merely the order in which one chief pastor succeeded another, but it says nothing as to the rank of the pastor, the relation that he occupied towards the presbyters, the validity of his ordination, or the effect of his ministrations—considerations which are all involved in the doctrine of apostolic succession as taught by modern writers. Supposing a number of presbyters in each congregation, presided over permanently by the oldest or ablest of their number, but, apart from his presidency, with no superiority of rank over his co-presbyters, are not all the conditions of these passages fulfilled? But a succession of this sort from the days of Paul and Peter, and Irenæus and Tertullian, implying no more, would fall short of what is meant by apostolic succession.

3. Observe what is handed down by this succession, according to these ancient writers. It is not prelatical authority, episcopal grace, or even a divine commission, but *the faith;* that is, the truths of the Christian salvation received into the minds and hearts of men, true knowledge consisting in apostolic doctrine, the pure undiluted truth of the Scripture, the grace of faith, and the pre-eminent gift of love. But these precious things are not what the apostolic succession hands down, seeing that succession is said to be possessed by the Anglican, Roman, and Greek Churches, as well as by the heretical sect of the Monophysites.

4. The use which Irenæus and Tertullian make of the chronological succession of pastors in the Churches planted by

the apostles, is to provide a test of truth against heresy. Their argument in substance is, that a system of doctrine taught in a Christian congregation by a line of ministers directly succeeding each other from the time of the apostles, is presumably a doctrine more likely to be apostolic and true than a doctrine which has no known representative until some time after the apostles are dead. The whole argument is an expansion of the well-known principle of Tertullian—"That which was first delivered is of the Lord and is true, whilst that is strange and false which was afterwards introduced,"[1]—a principle which we accept in its integrity, for the doctrines of our religion are all in the Scriptures, and the Scriptures are older than the most ancient Catholic or heretical novelty. It is a system of doctrine which Irenæus and Tertullian mean to support; and a system of doctrine can be handed down unimpaired by a line of pastors, perhaps even better than by a line of prelates. That these pastors should be anything more than presbyters, was not essential to the argument.

5. Whether there is much force in such reasoning, is quite another matter. It proceeds on the principle that a well-instructed congregation will not endure with patience, doctrine directly the reverse of that to which they have been accustomed; but whether this is true depends much on the methods adopted by the teacher, and the intelligence and spirit of the congregation, more especially its fidelity to the truth. These vary according to time, place, and circumstances; and this weakens the reasoning. But the design of the argument is to show that the truth proclaimed in the Churches at the close of the second century was, from the time of the apostles, handed down from man to man; or, as Irenæus puts it—"There is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the Church from the apostles till now, and handed down in truth." The argument is somewhat strengthened by the consideration, that in early times each new Church officer was as a rule taken from the congregation and instructed in Christianity by those who were in office before him. The removal of officials from one Church to another was rare in the second century; so that there was

[1] *De Præscrip.* 31.

little more than a simple transfer of doctrine from one pastor to another who followed him. Comparatively few had opportunity to study privately the manuscript Scriptures; all their religious knowledge was derived from the passages read in the Church meeting and from oral instruction. Under these circumstances an historical succession of pastors, deriving the substance of their teaching in the main from their predecessors, and transmitting it to those who followed, furnished a rough and ready test of truth that all could apply.

The kind of succession, therefore, spoken of by Irenæus and Tertullian differs from the modern theory of apostolic succession in a variety of matters.

1. We have no evidence that the bishops spoken of by these Fathers of the second century were prelates; on the contrary, we have strong reason to believe that they were presbyters—each the first presbyter of his Church and city.

2. In their time, the end of the second century, the first presbyter in a Church was called *the bishop;* but he had only one pastoral charge, he was not the pastor of any officials outside his charge, and did not rule over more Churches than one.

3. A century or so later, on the erection of Church edifices and the division of congregations, the bishop did become the prelate; but it was not so when Irenæus and Tertullian wrote.

4. There is nothing in the statements cited from the Fathers in question, to imply that ordination performed by a prelate is the only valid ordination.

5. There is nothing in the record to convey, that the succession spoken of transmits either grace or a commission; the idea before the minds of Irenæus and Tertullian is, the transmission of sound doctrine by pastors succeeding each other in the same Church from the time of the apostles.

6. There is nothing said by either Father obliging us to believe that he regarded an unbroken prelatical succession essential to a valid ministry, to saving ordinances, or to a true Church.

It is not till we reach Cyprian (248–258) that the distinction of rank between bishop and presbyter becomes very distinctly marked. In the preceding period, that is, from 150 till 250, speaking roughly, the chief presbyter in the city

Church is called *the* bishop to distinguish the president from his fellow-presbyters over whom he presides. These bishops, distinguishable from ordinary pastors in nothing except in name, succeed each other as individuals and teachers from the time of the apostles. They were therefore, as Tertullian and Irenæus believed, more likely to possess the truth as taught by the apostles, than teachers of more recent times who had sprung new opinions upon the Church, and who were not able to produce a similar guarantee of their value. This is substantially what is said by the oldest Fathers who speak of succession ; but it has little in common with what is called by the moderns apostolic succession, except the name.

Whatever effect the argument may have produced upon the contemporaries of Irenæus and Tertullian, it would not be regarded as very convincing now. There is indeed this much basis for it, that no person trained in a Church, and acquainted with its members, is likely to be chosen as its pastor, if he is known at the time when he seeks the appointment to vary to any great extent from the doctrine that he has learned from his predecessors. But this cannot be relied on as any certain evidence of the soundness of his principles. Since that time the Church has had ample experience, which futurity hid from the eyes of Tertullian. We know now that Arian bishops have succeeded orthodox, and orthodox bishops have succeeded Arians in the same charge : that Protestants now preach where friars once said mass, and that Protestant people listen placidly year after year to Romish sermons : that Socinians now occupy pulpits once filled by Puritans, and that orthodoxy reigns in districts and towns once dominated by heresy. Past history proves that an unbroken series of pastors or of prelates is no certain mark or guarantee of truth. The argument, therefore, is not strong, whether we consider the purpose for which it was produced by the Christian Fathers, or the object to which it is perverted by romanizing theologians.

3. *An unbroken Line of valid Ordinations cannot be proved.*

Having shown, as has been done, that Scripture does not teach the doctrine of apostolic succession, our work in regard to it is virtually at an end. A doctrine without basis in

Scripture has no claim upon faith. There is no necessity of argument requiring us to go a single step beyond. It is only to satisfy the curiosity of inquirers, that we pass away from the Scriptures into the twilight which lies outside.

Of course it is easy to present an "endless genealogy"—a long catalogue of names of bishops and popes, and to say that each succeeded to the place left vacant by the man who went before him. But much more requires to be done in order to make out a tolerably fair case. In every instance it needs to be historically proved that each man was canonically ordained, and also that the ordainers themselves were canonically ordained, and therefore able canonically to ordain others. If a man were to undertake, for example, the somewhat hopeless task of proving that every one of his ancestors from Adam down was legitimately married, it would be necessary to produce more than a genealogical stem for two hundred generations. The man who should undertake the task would need to produce the historical record, the names of the witnesses and of the officiating clergyman; above all, it would lie upon him to prove that the celebrant had due legal authority to perform the ceremony. So with ordination. It is not enough to set out a bare catalogue of names. We naturally ask what is the historical authority that the ordination ever took place? Who were present at the rites as witnesses of the fact? Who were the ordainers? What evidence have we that they had any authority to confer ordination? The difficulties of such a task can only be known to those who attempt it. Should there be a single flaw in the evidence, none can say to what extent the failure may affect the present generation, and the whole thing is thrown into uncertainty. Should one link in the chain be broken, the doctrine is of no avail. A valid ministry on the principle of apostolic succession is not universal; and who can be sure that the section whose ordinances are thus rendered invalid, is not the section of Christian workers who carry on their operations at our door?

Eusebius of Cesarea (313–337), one of whose objects in his *Ecclesiastical History* is to give an account of the succession of bishops in the principal Churches, acknowledges the difficulties which lay in his way. He claims indulgence for

the imperfections of his work, on the ground that he was the first to enter upon the subject, and that he was treading an unbroken and trackless path. He admits he is unable to find the bare vestiges of those who have travelled the way before him. His material is very slender; only slight intimations transmitted in the partial narratives of preceding writers.[1] Which of Paul and Peter's fellow-labourers "were judged suitable to feed the Churches established by these apostles, *it is not easy to say*, any further than may be gathered from the writings of Paul."[2] These are his own words. From this we gather that Eusebius, writing early in the fourth century, has no knowledge as to those who immediately followed the apostles, further than he can gather from Paul's Epistles—a source of knowledge open to us no less than to him. Well may Dr. Stillingfleet in these circumstances ask—"What becomes then of our unquestionable line of the succession of the bishops of several Churches, and the large diagrams made of the apostolical Churches with every one's name set down in his order? . . . Is it come to this at last, that we have nothing certain but what we have in Scripture? And must then the tradition of the Church be our rule to interpret Scripture by?"[3]

The names of the early Roman bishops are barely known to us; the order of their succession is uncertain. Irenæus states that "the blessed apostles having founded and built up the Church, committed into the hands of Linus the office of the episcopate."[4] Tertullian states that "the Church of Rome makes Clement to have been ordained in like manner by Peter."[5] Here there is a difference as to the fact between the two oldest authorities, causing doubt and uncertainty at the first step. It must be also borne in mind, that Irenæus wrote of an event which occurred 120 years before his own time, and resided at a place unfavourable even for gathering up the local tradition. Tertullian, still farther removed from the event in regard to time, gives a quite different account of the matter. Are we to believe them both, or to believe neither? If we believe both, which seems the most reasonable view, then Linus and Clement were both bishops in the

[1] *Ecc. Hist.* i. 1. [2] *Ecc. Hist.* iii. 4. [3] *Irenicum*, p. 297.
[4] *Hær.* iii. 3. 3. [5] *De Præscrip.* 32.

Roman Church at the same time,—a state of things borne out by the precedent of Philippi (Phil. i. 1), and quite in harmony with the Presbyterian view of the episcopal office. If we believe one and not the other, is that not a mere arbitrary act, with no real reason for its base? If we believe neither, what comes of the apostolic succession, which assumes that one of them states a fact and the other states a fiction?

There is evidently something wrong about the very first link of the chain. The statements do not seem to be sober truth; the very look of them suggests tradition or a guess. Irenæus and Tertullian, we believe, were honest men; no better witnesses need be sought for anything which came under their own personal observation. But nobody is good authority for a minute event which is said to have occurred in a foreign city more than a hundred years before he wrote, and for which he assigns no evidence whatever. There is not a court in Christendom where testimony of that kind would be received. This is the confusion which drew from Stillingfleet the oft-quoted remark—"Here the succession is as muddy as the Tiber itself."[1]

The early Roman bishops so called—Anacletus, Cletus, Alexander, Sixtus, Telesphorus, and Hyginus, are simply shadows. Their names only are recorded in the genuine literature of the times. Who can prove that any of them was ordained at all, much less that he received a canonical ordination? No contemporary writer throws any light whatever on that subject. The advocate of apostolic succession is obliged here to fall back on probabilities and suppositions; but mere suppositions and probabilities are not proofs.

When difficulties of this kind are encountered at the first step, how can we with any confidence follow the line of episcopal ordination down through the Middle Ages? Sometimes there were three bishops of Rome at one time. Often there were two, and people did not know which was pope, and which was anti-pope; for both professed to be the successor of Peter, and the one excommunicated the other. When one of them succeeded in putting down his rival, the first thing the victor did was to nullify the ordinations of the vanquished. If the right of a Christian minister to

[1] *Irenicum*, p. 322.

preach the gospel in the nineteenth century depends on such an improbable thing, as that all the popes and prelates from whom he derives authority were themselves canonically ordained, he will find it much more difficult than he imagines to establish his right. Of this, one or two examples only will be sufficient.

Near the end of the ninth century, from 891 till 896, Formosus filled the papal chair. When a bishop he had been concerned in a conspiracy to murder, for which he had been excommunicated, and put under promise neither to resume episcopal functions nor to return to Rome. From another pope he obtained absolution for his offence, and was acting as Bishop of Porto at the very time of his election to the popedom. His election was uncanonical in this respect, that it was a violation of the old canon forbidding the translation of bishops from one see to another, which although often set aside in practice, was the unrepealed law of the Church. He filled the papal chair for five years. He crowned the Emperor Arnulf. His successor Boniface VII. had been twice deposed for impurity of life; but his reign was only fifteen days. Stephen VI. followed. He had the body of Formosus disinterred, dressed in the official robes of a pontiff, seated in the chair of a pope, sentenced to deposition, mutilated, and cast into the Tiber. His ordinations were declared null and void, and all who had been ordained by Formosus, and were still alive, were reordained by Stephen. But John IX. called a council in 898, and condemned the re-ordinations.[1]

The following is the result as described by Janus[2]:—

"Auxilius, who was a contemporary, said that through this universal rejection and repetition of orders (*ordinatio, exordinatio, et superordinatio*) matters had come to such a pass in Rome, that for twenty years the Christian religion had been interrupted and extinguished in Italy. Popes and Synods decided in glaring contradiction to one another, now for, now against, the validity of the ordinations, and it was self-evident that in Rome all sure knowledge in the doctrine of ordination was lost."

The following account of the condition of the Church at the

[1] Milman's *Latin Christianity*, Book v. chap. vii.

[2] See p. 52.

same period (887–963) is taken from a celebrated writer, who himself lived and died a member of the Romish Church:—

"Popes were then excommunicated by their successors, and their acts cassed and annulled, not excepting the very administration of sacraments. Six popes were driven out and dethroned by those who aspired to their places. Two popes were put to death, and Pope Stephen VIII. wounded in the face with so much deformity that he never after appeared in public. Theodora, a famous courtezan, by the interest and faction she had then in Rome, got her professed lover chosen pope, who was called John X. And John XI. was chosen pope at the age of twenty years, the bastard of another pope who had died eighteen years before. And, in short, such a series of wild disorders gave occasion to say that those times produced, not popes, but monsters."[1]

A man who thinks that he has no authority to preach the gospel, except that derived from a chain of canonically ordained persons, one of the links of which is Pope Formosus, whose ordinations were first held valid, then nullified, then pronounced valid again, ought to be sure of his ground. Which of the contradictory decisions was in reality valid; which was null, and which took effect? If any intelligent man—intelligent enough to know what really occurred at that time—can suppose that a divine commission, not to speak of the Holy Ghost, has been conveyed to him by a medium so tainted, his credulity must be of no ordinary kind. A commission, to be lawful, must be conferred by those whose right to confer it is from their own point of view undoubted. That not a few eminently moral and excellent men have filled the papal chair since the early ages, is certain; but that the list includes a considerable proportion of disreputable persons, from Callistus in the third century down to Alexander Borgia in the fifteenth, is equally clear. The efficacy of a religious rite does not depend necessarily on the virtue of the minister by whom it is administered; yet it is difficult to think that men so eminently wicked as the popes of the ninth century could possibly be links in a chain of valid ordinations, essential to the existence of a true Church and to the salvation of its members.

[1] Father Paul Sarpi on *Benefices*, chap. xix. p. 61.

But at this point Mr. Palmer steps in to remind us that English and Irish orders flow from Rome at a point higher up the stream; they come, he says, from Celestine, Gregory, and Vitalian, who ordained Patrick for the Irish, and Augustine and Theodore for the English.[1] But the great drawback to this bold statement, is that Patrick, neither in his *Confession*, nor in his *Letter to Coroticus*, nor in the *Armour*, his only genuine works, ever intimates that he was at Rome or derived his mission from the pope; neither does any other writer, till Patrick was dead 200 years. His ordination by any pope is therefore unhistorical. Even Augustine's ordination by Gregory the Great, although more likely, is nevertheless doubtful. Mr. Palmer is not entitled to speak confidently on a matter so much disputed, without producing proof. The statement of one writer who professes to have examined the matter is, that "out of thirty-six Archbishops of Canterbury prior to Cranmer, twelve have been consecrated by popes, so that through this source the Romish succession has been introduced twelve times." "Is it not true," asks another, "that twenty-nine archbishops of the Church of England between the seventh and fifteenth centuries were ordained directly by the pope or the pope's legate? Not only so, but Chichely, Archbishop of York, as we find it stated,[2] was ordained by Gregory XII., one of the three popes then in conflict, and all of whom were at last deposed." In face of such statements it is impossible to get over the fact that the English episcopate was renewed from Rome time after time; and we cannot divest ourselves of the uncertainty produced by the deposition of one pope after another, and the confusion produced by the nullification and ratification of their ordinations. Who now can be sure whether it was the ratification or the nullification that holds good?

The Irish ordinations are subject to the same drawback. Patrick, indeed, says that he was "constituted a bishop in Ireland,"[3] a fact which does not testify to a Roman mission; but by whom he was ordained, or in what circumstances, he

[1] See extract near the beginning of this chapter.

[2] Smyth on *Apostolic Succession*, p. 201.

[3] "Hiberione constitutus episcopus." *Epistola* i. in Haddan and Stubbs, vol. ii. part ii.

does not explain. Who his ordainers were, or what was their canonical right to officiate, nobody now can say. A clergyman who has no right to preach the gospel, except what he derives from the ancient Irish Church, perhaps may trace his authority to Patrick, though even that is a forlorn hope, but he can never get farther; for although we have it from himself that Patrick was a bishop, there is no historical evidence whatever as to the time, place, persons, or circumstances under which he was ordained. Who therefore can prove that his ordination was canonical, or that he was ordained at all?

But he would have some difficulty in tracing his orders even to Patrick. St. Bernard, in his *Life of Malachi*, tells that for fifteen generations of bishops prior to Celsus, who was Archbishop of Armagh (1106–1129), that high office had descended by hereditary succession, and that eight married men *not in orders* were his predecessors in that see.[1] Going a little higher up, we find the Synod of Chelsea, in England (A.D. 816), forbidding the ministrations of clergy from Ireland, "because we know not whence nor by whom they are ordained."[2] After the English invasion, bishops consecrated in England were sent over to occupy Irish sees, and this down to a period comparatively recent. Cases of this kind were numerous, so that the Irish succession, in addition to difficulties peculiarly its own, is involved in the uncertainty attaching to the English succession also.

Mr. Palmer may boast that any minister may trace up his ordination to Peter and Paul if he chooses. Bold assertion and a catalogue of names, of course, can be produced indeed at any time; but to prove historically an unbroken series of canonical ordinations, and to prove that the persons who in each case officiated had themselves a valid right to ordain, is a very different matter, to which the antiquarian lore of Mr. Palmer himself would be scarcely equal.

[1] "Denique jam octo extiterant ante Celsum viri uxorati, et *absque ordinibus*, litterati tamen. Inde tota illa per universam Hiberniam . . . dissolutio ecclesiasticæ disciplinæ." *Vita Malachiæ*, cap. x., in Migne, *Pat. Lat.* vol. clxxxii. p. 1086.

[2] "Quia incertum est nobis ne ab aliquo ordinentur." *Acts of the Council*, chap. v., in Haddan and Stubbs, vol. iii. p. 581.

4. *Is a Canonical Ordination a Common Event?*

By a canonical ordination we understand an ordination conducted in accordance with the rules of the Church in force at the time when the rite was performed. It is admitted on all sides that no person can communicate canonical orders who has not himself been ordained canonically, that is, according to the canons of the Church—the rules of Church order obligatory at the time. Before we can say that an ordination was valid or regular, we must know what the canons required, and be satisfied that the demand was complied with.

1. The presence of three bishops, ever since the General Council of Nice, is essential to an ordination. The first of the so-called apostolic canons declared that a bishop must be ordained "by *two* or by *three* bishops;" but the 4th canon of Nice took higher ground. It enacted:—

"The bishop shall be appointed by all the bishops in the province; if that is not possible on account of pressing necessity, or on account of the length of journeys, *three at the least* shall meet and proceed to the imposition of hands, with the permission of those absent in writing."

The Council of Arles, which met eleven years before, in 314 A.D., and which, although not a General Council, was attended by more bishops than various other councils that stand on the œcumenical list, spoke out strongly on the same point:—

"In regard to those who claim that they alone should ordain bishops, it is our pleasure that none presume to do so, unless he take *seven* other bishops with him. If seven cannot be obtained, *let him not dare to ordain with less than three.*"[1]

A valid ordination according to the canons, thus requires the presence of three bishops at least to lay on hands. In order to make out an uninterrupted series of episcopal ordinations, this must be done in the case of every bishop from Linus down. Who was present, we may ask, when Linus laid on hands, or by whom was his successor ordained? Historical evidence for the answer to this question is a great desideratum.

In defiance of the rule of the Church, uncanonical ordinations were not unknown, and some were occasionally recorded.

[1] Council of Arles, 20th canon.

Thus from the Acts of the Synod of Regium, held in 439 A.D., we learn that *two* bishops consecrated one Armentarius; that his ordination was held to be void; that some whom he had ordained were deposed and others retained; and that a canon was passed "in order to prevent uncanonical ordinations for the future."[1]

Again, we learn from Anastasius the librarian, that Pope Pelagius I. (555–560) was ordained by two bishops from remote parts of Italy, and a presbyter of Ostia.[2] Let this fact be read in the light of the 4th canon of Nice, and the reader can then decide for himself whether all the popes were themselves canonically ordained. If there were irregularities in the succession to the most conspicuous see of Christendom, we are not warranted to speak confidently of the canonical order maintained in sees that were more obscure.

Gregory the Great, in answer to a question put by Augustine of Canterbury—"Whether a bishop may be ordained without other bishops being present?" said, "As for the Church of England, in which you are as yet the only bishop, you can no otherwise ordain a bishop than in the absence of other bishops."[3] This is simply the pope's taking it upon him to set aside the decision of a General Council, and that not on the ground of necessity, but of the inconvenience of bringing over two or three bishops from Gaul to join in the ordination. More than fifty years after Augustine, in the year 664, there was only one bishop in all Britain canonically ordained according to the Roman idea, and two schismatical bishops had to be called in to make up the orthodox three in a new ordination.[4] From these examples the reader can estimate the difficulties which would press upon the man, who would undertake to prove an uninterrupted series of canonical ordinations from Peter to Palmer, or from Paul to Bishop Wordsworth.

2. A canonical election must precede a valid ordination.

[1] Hefele, *Councils*, iii. sec. 161.

[2] "Inventi sunt duo episcopi, Joannes de Perusia, et Bonus de Florentina, et Andreas presbyter de Hostia, et ordinaverunt eum pontificem." Anastasius, *De Vitis Pontificum*, in Migne, *Pat. Lat.* vol. cxxviii. p. 611.

[3] Bede's *Ecc. Hist.* i. 27. 6.

[4] *Ibid.* iii. 28.

If a pope were to be enthroned without such an election, he must, according to the Canon Law, be held as an apostate.[1] But then what is a canonical election? We may not be able to say all that a canonical election implies, but it includes at least this much, that the election is by a majority of the elective body, and that the choice is not determined by popular tumult or military violence.[2] In the former case there would be virtually no election; in the latter, a bishop forced in by such methods is deserving of expulsion from his see.

But who can say that the election of Pope Damasus (367–384) was canonical, after reading the following account of it in Ammianus Marcellinus (350–390), one of his contemporaries:—

"Damasus and Ursinus, being both immoderately eager to obtain the bishopric, formed parties and carried on the conflict with great asperity, the partisans of each carrying their violence to actual battle, in which men were wounded and killed. . . . Ultimately Damasus got the best of the strife by the strenuous efforts of his partisans. It is certain that on one day one hundred and thirty-seven dead bodies were found in the Basilica of Sicininus, which is a Christian Church. And the populace who had been thus roused to a state of ferocity were with great difficulty restored to order."[3]

Tumult and violence destroy a canonical election; but the pope who is appointed without canonical election is an "apostate" according to Canon Law. That being so, what was Damasus? Yet Damasus was one of those popes, prior to Gregory, from whom the Anglican succession is derived, and by all accounts was not among the worst of them.

As an example of a pope elected by a minority, but who succeeded in putting down his rival, who was elected by the majority of the cardinals in canonical form, we need only refer to the case of Innocent II. in 1130. The pope canonically elected, Anacletus II., ranks as the anti-pope

[1] Gratian, *Decretum*, i. 79. 3, in Migne, *Pat. Lat.* vol. clxxxvii.
[2] Gratian, *Decretum*, i. 79. 9.
[3] Ammianus Marcellinus, *History*, xxvii. 3. 12 and 13.

though he was elected by thirty-two cardinals as opposed to sixteen for his rival.[1]

3. The Canon Law forbids a minor to be ordained. The 11th canon of the Council of Cesarea expressly lays down the law, that "No one is to be ordained priest before he is thirty years of age." Gratian inserts this canon in the *Decretum*, and also an extract from an Epistle of Pope Zachary, stating that, in case of necessity, he may be as young as twenty-five.[2]

But how does the canon agree with the following facts?—

John XII. (955–963) was already in holy orders when he was called to the papal chair at the age of sixteen. The Emperor Otho called a Synod at St. Peter's to inquire into his conduct. Two eminent ecclesiastics, a bishop and a cardinal deacon, testified that they had seen John ordain a deacon in a stable without any attention to the usual forms. They testified, further, that he had defiled the pontifical palace by shameless acts; that he had put out the eyes of Benedict, his spiritual father; that he had set fire to houses, and that he had drunk to the health of the devil. John was asked in a respectful letter to appear before the Synod and answer the charges. His reply to this letter was in these words: "John the bishop, the servant of the servants of God, to all the bishops: we have heard tell that you wish to set up another pope; if you do this, by the Almighty God I will excommunicate you, so that you shall not have power to say the mass or to ordain no one."[3]

Benedict IX. (1033–1046) was made pope when a boy of ten or twelve years old. The subsequent career of the boy-pontiff is thus told by Milman:—

"For twelve years Benedict IX., under the protection of his powerful kindred, ruled in Rome, in the words of one of his successors, Victor III., leading a life so shameful, so foul, and so execrable, that he shuddered to describe it. He ruled like a captain of banditti rather than a prelate. Adulteries, homicides, perpetrated by his own hand, passed unnoticed, unrevenged; for the patrician of the city, Gregory, was the

[1] Milman, *Lat. Christ.* Book viii. chap. iv.
[2] *Decretum*, i. 78. 4 and 5.
[3] See Bryce's *Holy Roman Empire*, Robertson, Philip Smith, etc.

brother of the pope; another brother Peter, an active partisan."[1]

Pope Leo X., who filled the papal chair at the time of the Reformation, had been made a cardinal in 1489, when he was only thirteen years of age.

These examples will suffice to show the amount of deference which was paid to the Canon Law in regard to age at ordination.

4. Simony disqualifies a clergyman from ecclesiastical duty, and exposes him to serious penalty. The 2nd canon of the General Council of Chalcedon is as follows:—

"If a bishop confers ordination for money, and turns the grace which cannot be bought into merchandise, and consecrates a bishop, or chorepiscopus, or priest, or deacon, or any other cleric, or appoints for money an œconomus, or advocate, or prosmonarios (attendant), or any other servant of the Church, for the sake of base gain, upon conviction he shall endanger his own office; and he who is ordained shall have no advantage from his ordination or office obtained by purchase, but shall lose the dignity or the post which he has received for money."[2]

But although simony exposed the person who obtained the office by purchase to serious penalties, and endangered his own office, yet the prevalence of the practice is shown by the fact, that when Leo IX., in 1049, was in favour of nullifying all simoniacal ordinations, he was remonstrated with by the majority of the Italian and French bishops, who assured him, that if he were to do so, "scarce any would be found in some dioceses capable of performing the sacerdotal or episcopal functions."[3]

5. Heretical ordinations and baptism, according to the teaching of the general Church, are of somewhat doubtful validity. Speaking of heretics who ordain, the 68th apostolic canon says: "They who have been baptized or ordained by such, cannot be either Christians or clergymen." Even Dr. Newman says: "At most, heretical ordination is not certainly, but only probably valid."[4]

But unfortunately heretics have been detected within the

[1] *Latin Christianity*, Book v. chap. xiv. [2] Hefele, *Councils*, iii. p. 387.
[3] Bower's *Lives of the Popes*, vol. v. p. 167. [4] *Essays*, vol. ii. p. 81.

Church as well as without, and some have had the audacity to sit down in the papal chair. It cannot be denied that Pope Liberius signed an Arian creed; Pope Honorius was condemned by a General Council for being a Monothelite; and Pope John XXII. barely escaped condemnation for heresy. Yet these men were all links in the chain of episcopal succession; and it cannot but be, that the hands of these men were laid upon many whose ecclesiastical descendants are with us still. Dr. Newman says, that in the Anglican Church half the bishops have had their baptism from dissent;[1] and dissent in the opinion of himself and his school is the greatest heresy of all.

6. The consent of the metropolitan is also essential to the ordination of the bishop. "If," says the 6th canon of the Nicene Council, "any one has become a bishop without the approval of the metropolitan, the great Synod commands him not to remain a bishop." The fact is that a very small matter may disqualify a bishop, or nullify an ordination. Dr. Newman tells of a man who had to be reordained, because at his first ordination it was omitted to put into his hands paten and chalice.[2] If reordination was necessary in such a case, what are we to say of the ministerial acts done by persons who, like Barnabas and Timothy, were ordained without either chalice or paten?

When, therefore, we consider how many things are essential to a valid ordination, that the absence of any of them endangers if it does not destroy the validity of the act, that the presence of all of them is in every instance very difficult of proof, and that in all probability near 300 ordinations in a direct line lie between any living clergyman and the apostles of Christ, we feel no surprise that multitudes, who believe that the validity of their ministrations depends on their being connected with the apostles by an unbroken line of canonical ordinations, must entertain grave and well-founded doubts whether they themselves are ministers of Christ or not. We do not see how, on their principles, it could be otherwise. They may be under the impression that all is right, but how can they divest themselves of the suspicion that some flaw, unseen by them, but known to God, invalidates the whole?

[1] *Essays*, vol. i. p. 341. [2] *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 82.

Instead of canonical ordination being a common thing, it is very rare, and still more rare in the past ages than now. If the conditions necessary cannot be shown to exist in every case of the 300 ordinations, more or less, which lie between us and the apostolic age, then a canonical ordination may be possible, but cannot be proved; and if a canonical ordination cannot be proved, a valid ministry, depending on an unbroken line of episcopal ordinations, is a mere fancy without substance, a shadow without reality.

5. *The Channel through which it comes.*

Apostolical succession comes to the Anglican bishops through the channel of the popes. This fact will with very many decide the question, for they cannot understand how pope and cardinals, who as a rule do not themselves preach the gospel, can give to others, or withhold from them, the authority to preach it. Some hold the alleged commission to be faulty, on the ground that they regard the Church over which pope and cardinals are permitted to preside as lapsing so far from the truth as to become antichristian; and an apostate Church has, as they conceive, lost the power of conferring valid ordination. Many Anglicans, on the other hand, attach so much importance to the commission transmitted to them by the pope and his bishops, that without that commission they think it impossible to become true ministers even by the call and grace of God.

We need not enter on the knotty question, whether the higher clergy in the Romish Church have lost or still retain the power of conferring a valid ordination. We only observe that if they have power to confer apostolic authority, they have also power, for what they conceive sound and valid reasons, to resume the gift they have conferred. They consider that they have good reason for doing so in the present case. They regard the Anglican clergy as schismatics, if not heretics;[1] and, on the ground that they are so, Rome has withdrawn from them any authority that she once bestowed.

Some Anglicans maintain that the Romish Church did not

[1] "The Anglican bishops," says Newman, "for three centuries have lived and died in heresy." *Essays*, vol. ii. p. 81.

apostatize till the Council of Trent[1] (1545–1564), when she adopted officially new articles of faith, additional to the three Catholic creeds—the Nicene, the Apostles', and Athanasian—which, previous to the Reformation, were the doctrinal symbols of the Western Church. The Anglican communion, it may be observed, took the very same course by officially adding the Thirty-nine Articles to the three creeds, and was separated from the Romish Church before the Council of Trent assembled. The Anglican body took separate existence from the Papal Church in 1534; but the fact that she had so withdrawn before the Papal Church, according to the *Tracts for the Times*, apostatized, only makes her schismatic position more apparent. To put an end to all cavil as to the relation in which the two Churches stand to each other, the Pope in 1704 issued a declaration, the effect of which is to pronounce the Anglican communion in a state of schism, and her orders to be null.[2] The very measure which Canterbury deals out to the Church of Scotland and to the Reformed Churches everywhere, Rome deals out to Canterbury, and repudiates her ordination as of no validity whatever. The Anglican position is thus ironically stated by Bishop Hoadley:—

"As for us of the Church of England, we have bishops in a succession as certainly uninterrupted from the apostles as your Church could communicate to us; and on this bottom we have a right to separate from you; but no flesh living has any right to differ or separate from us."[3]

The way in which most people of intelligence will regard the matter is this: The Roman Church is either a true Church or a false Church. If a true Church, it was schismatical to separate from her; if a false Church, it was not possible for her to transmit a divine commission. If the popes were not usurpers, but honestly performing the duties to which God called them, then it was sin in Anglicanism to withdraw its allegiance from papal rule; if, on the other hand, the pope is

[1] "If she has apostatized, it was at the time of the Council of Trent. Then, if at any time, surely not before, did the Roman communion bind itself in covenant to the cause of Antichrist. But before that time, grievous as might be the corruptions of the Church, no individual bishop, priest, or deacon was bound to the maintenance of them." *Tracts for the Times*, No. 15.

[2] Article "Anglicanism," in *Edinburgh Review* for 1843.

[3] See Smyth's *Apostolic Succession*, p. 266.

the man of sin, sitting in the temple of God, he must be Antichrist, and a commission to preach Christ which is derived from Antichrist is not much to boast of. In either case, what the pope gave, the pope can take away; and in this case he has taken away.

6. *Argument from Consequences.*

Arguments from consequences are in general not worthy of attention. It is truth we seek, and we wish to know the truth and hold the truth, be the consequences what they may. But this is a peculiar case; the belief in apostolic succession is not so much the result of the study of the Scripture, as of the delusion that it furnishes a kind of vantage ground in argument against other Christians who do not develop prelates, and which may therefore be occupied innocently and with good intentions. Having shown that it is without any foundation in Scripture, we may now be permitted to show the serious consequences of accepting such a heresy.

If Anglicans believe, that their right to preach the gospel depends absolutely on the commission which they and their bishops received from the papal bishops at the Reformation, their separation from men who not only held, but could transmit to others, a divine commission, was, on their own principles, from the first a very doubtful affair. To throw off allegiance to such men makes the Reformation, from their standpoint, unjustifiable, and brands the movement, not as a protest against an intolerable system of error, but a revolt against the kingdom of God.

Still more is this the case when it is remembered, that the Anglican separation from the Roman Church Catholic was the act of a section of the body in opposition to the whole—the minority rising in rebellion against the majority of the Papal Church, of which hitherto it had been a part, and numerically a small part too. Prior to the Reformation, the Roman Church Catholic was, as it still is, a unity, not a conglomeration or alliance of independent national Churches, each with full authority to act for itself. It was not therefore constitutionally competent for a minority, adopting opinions repudiated by the majority, to separate from them, and to

usurp the power and prerogatives of the whole. The minority claimed the right to separate from those admitted to hold a divine commission, and to exercise rights which were refused them by the majority. This converts the Reformation into a revolt and an usurpation. Some Anglicans have been forced by a sense of consistency to view in this light that great religious revolution to which their countrymen owe their freedom, and have actually returned to membership in that congenial fold, from which on their principles their ancestors should never have departed. Results of this kind are serious enough to make good men pause, and reflect whether the doctrine can be sound from which such consequences flow.

Gross error in regard to those truths which bear upon the gospel salvation would kill any commission, however valid it once may have been, or however pure the source from which t was originally drawn. Had Paul or had Peter, could we only suppose it, denied a cardinal truth of salvation, and preached "another gospel," his commission would have been cancelled, and himself "accursed." Christ commissions no man, we may be sure, to preach what is false, ordain him who may. No Romish or Anglican divine would question that the Arian bishops of the fourth century had a valid ministry, so far as an unbroken line of episcopal ordinations could give it; but can we conceive that they had an apostolic commission to teach men to deny the Deity of the Son of God? No commission can warrant any man to teach others to believe a lie. If bishops teach heresy, or ordain others to teach it, their commission, supposing it to have been originally divine, thereby drops, and they can no longer hand on to others what they themselves do not possess. Whatever some of their degenerate representatives may think now, Luther and Calvin would never have separated from the Church as it then was, if they had regarded the bishops either as teaching the truth or able and willing to commission others to teach it. Neither of the great Reformers had the slightest faith in the validity of orders whose only recommendation was that they were derived from Rome. Those who have such faith ought never to have separated; for separation, except on the ground of heresy in doctrine and practice, is schism. Romish writers to this day speak of the English Reformation as the "Anglican Schism;"

and Anglicans who believe in apostolic succession are not entitled to disown the impeachment.

Ever since the year 1534 there has been in this country a Papal Church and an Anglican Church; and in more recent times two competing lines of prelates, each regarding its own commission as divine, and each feeling compassion for the other as fallen and apostate. The Lord Bishop is always sure to have his titular namesake over the way. Both are not truly commissioned; one of them at least, though perhaps he does not know it, is under a mistake. If the ordination of the Romish prelate gives a valid commission, it follows that the Lord Jesus commissions some men to say mass, to forgive sins committed against God, to transmute bread and wine into flesh and blood, and to release souls from the fire of purgatory, all of which a priest in holy orders claims that he has power to do. But if the commission of the Anglican priest is divine, all this is reversed. In that case the clergyman obtains authority from the Lord Jesus to announce publicly that the sacrifice of the mass is a "blasphemous fable" (Art. 31); that transubstantiation is "repugnant to the plain words of Scripture" (Art. 28); and that the Romish doctrine concerning purgatory and pardon is "a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture" (Art. 22). Both claim a divine commission, transmitted in an unbroken chain of episcopal ordination down from Christ and His apostles; if these claims are good, then the Lord commissions men to go forth and teach doctrines the most opposite and contradictory of each other. This would be an act unworthy of Jesus. The Roman priest, however mistaken we believe him to be, is at least consistent, because he denies that an Anglican minister, that is, a man ordained by a schismatical and heretical bishop, has any divine commission whatever. But the Anglican clergyman who believes in apostolic succession, believes, and is bound to believe, that himself and the Roman priest also, whose ordination is as good as his own, are both divinely commissioned, although they preach contradictory doctrines; and that although one aims to pull down what the other tries to build up, they both exercise a valid ministry, because both "by an unbroken spiritual descent of ordinations derive their mission from the apostles of the Lord."

We need scarcely add, that if prelatical ordination is essential to a valid ministerial commission, then the most orthodox and godly minister not an Episcopalian is merely a layman without a mission, whereas a Roman priest, even though his knowledge of the word of God may be nothing, and his life may be profligate, holds a commission from the Lord. Such a consequence as this, there are some Anglicans who could face heroically. The fact that, if true, it would unchurch others, may with such be anything but a drawback. Archdeacon Hare hints as much when he says—"Such a sledge-hammer argument against Dissenters is to some churchly souls its strongest recommendation."

7. *The True Test of a Gospel Minister.*

The best test of a gospel minister is not his ordination, but the message which he carries to men. That message is written at full length in the Holy Scriptures; and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, intelligent men honestly desirous to know the truth can judge whether the message delivered is in harmony with the contents of the inspired word. By all means let the bearer of the message be orderly appointed to his office; but if the message which he delivers be "another gospel," it makes little matter that the prelate who ordained him can trace up his ecclesiastical lineage to Peter. He whom Christ commissions carries truth in his heart and on his lips; but if the message which he brings to the congregation is at variance with the record of divine truth in the Bible, it is clear that God has not sent the messenger. It is never wrong to apply to any preacher the test that men are praised for applying to the apostle of Christ (Acts xvii. 11). God does not send any man to preach heresy and falsehood. Even Newman himself admits that "an apostolical ministry necessarily involves an apostolical teaching."[1]

If a minister of Christ is set apart to his office, as Timothy was, "with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery," this is held by full-blown Anglicans to be no good; it is only a flaw in his ecclesiastical pedigree—a bar sinister on his

[1] Newman's *Essays*, vol. ii. p. 78.

ecclesiastical escutcheon. However scriptural the rite by which he is ordained to Church office, if a prelate is not present to take the first place, the man is told that his ministry is not valid, and the ordinances which he administers are shadows and shams. The modern method of detecting the prophet of error is the want of episcopal ordination. Perhaps the old way taught by the Master is the best way after all. It is only too true, that the false prophet may make his way into any Church, and may sometimes push himself in through the door of the most canonical and orthodox appointment. Judas derived his apostolic authority from the primal source, but repaid the Master with the kiss of a traitor. Demas no doubt received his ministerial commission from Paul; nevertheless he forsook his post, for he loved this present world. These men, tested by their "fruits," were not worthy of approval; but, tested by ordination, they could stand the most rigid test that the stiffest Anglican would care to apply. Their orders were at first hand, not derived from the uncanonical action of sixty or seventy generations of dubious predecessors. Nevertheless the "fruits" produced in themselves and in others, showed what they were.

The teacher is known by the results. The effects, beneficial or otherwise, produced by a man's ministry upon human souls within the sphere of his labours, supply a rough and ready test which will enable others to judge whether or not he is sent of God. Not indeed that all true ministers are successful, or that any of them is as successful as he wishes; but if the results of a man's life-work are evil or little but evil, this indicates clearly enough the quarter from which his mission comes, and in such a case it does not seem to us that it matters much in the melancholy issue, whether it was prelate or presbytery that, on his entrance upon the work, laid hands upon his head. We adopt cordially the words of Tertullian:—

"Who are the false prophets, but deceptive predictors of the future? Who are the false apostles, but the preachers of a spurious gospel? Who are the antichrists both now and for evermore, but the men who rebel against Christ?"[1]

[1] *De Prescrip.* 4.

8. *Anglican Opinion on the Subject.*

Human authority in matters of religion does not weigh the weight of a feather with any man, who makes the word of God contained in the Holy Scriptures the only rule of his faith. It is not as authorities that we append the following opinions of distinguished men who belonged in life to the Anglican communion; our only object is to show that some of the ablest minds in that communion, were as much disbelievers in the apostolical succession as any Presbyterian could possibly be.

The venerated Archbishop WHATELY says:—"There is not a minister in all Christendom who is able to trace up with any approach to certainty his own spiritual pedigree."[1]

Dean MILMAN, the most gifted and learned Church historian ever yet produced by the Anglican body, speaking of the early bishops, remarks:—"It was only in a very limited and imperfect sense, that they could even in the sees founded by the apostles be called the successors of the apostles."[2]

Dean ALFORD, commenting on John xx. 23, says:—"This gift belongs to the Church in all ages, and especially to those who by legitimate appointment are set to minister in the Churches of Christ; not by *successive delegation from the apostles,—of which fiction I find in the New Testament no trace,* —but by their mission from Christ, the bestower of the spirit for their office, when orderly and legitimately conferred upon them by the various Churches."

The Rev. E. A. LITTON, whose able treatise on the *Church of Christ* we have so often had occasion to cite, says:—

"The place which the apostles occupied while they lived is now filled, not by a living order of ministers, but by their own inspired writings, which constitute or ought to constitute the supreme authority in the Church of God. In their writings the apostles still live and speak: St. Paul and St. Peter, St. John and St. Matthew have not abdicated their office, or transferred it to other persons; they still govern the universal Church, decide points of doctrine, reform abuses, set in order

[1] *Kingdom of Christ*, Essay ii. 30.
[2] *Latin Christianity*, Book ii. chap. 4.

Christian societies; so that there is no need as there is no evidence for the continuation of a living apostolate." [1]

Archdeacon HARE comments on the apostolic succession in the following tart fashion:—

"This monstrous error, however, which would restrict the power of Christ's mediatorial sacrifice and the efficacy of His sacraments within the limits of Episcopal Churches, is still confined, I trust, to some of our weaker brethren, who, in the want of logical and plastic power, stake themselves up with positive peremptory assertions. But a modification of the same error is not uncommon even among the better writers of our day, who have lately been squeamish in the application of the term Church to any branch of the Church, except such as are subject to episcopal government, who call the Lutheran Church, for instance, the Lutheran *Body* or the Lutheran *Communion;* and who think to evade recognising the Scottish Church by terming it the *Kirk.* Such silliness might make one laugh, unless the miserable evils which absurdities of this kind produce turned one's laugh into a groan." [2]

Lord MACAULAY, whose great historical reputation gives force to his opinion as a lay member of the Anglican Church, says:—

"Since the first century, not less, in all probability, than a hundred thousand persons have exercised the functions of bishops. That many of these have not been bishops by apostolic succession is quite certain. . . . We only say that we see no satisfactory proof of the fact that the Church of England possesses the apostolic succession." [3]

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN was in early life a zealous Anglican clergyman. But, starting on the false principle that the Church and not the Bible is the teacher of divine truth, he adopted the errors of baptismal regeneration, Church tradition, the apostolic succession, the sacramental system, and contracted in consequence such an admiration for the Romish Church, in whose garden these weeds grow in full flower, that he became

[1] Litton's *Church of Christ*, p. 410.

[2] I do not find this passage in my copy of *The Mission of the Comforter*, which is the third edition, edited by E. H. Plumptre; but Mellor cites it, and gives at p. 135 the reference to Hare, vol. ii. pp. 1007–1010.

[3] Macaulay's *Essay on Gladstone.*

a Roman Catholic, and rose to be a cardinal in that community. It is interesting to read the opinion that he entertained after his conversion, in regard to apostolic succession claimed by the Church that he left:—

"As to its possession of an episcopal succession from the time of the apostles, well, it may have it, and if the Holy See ever so decide, I will believe it, as being the decision of a higher judgment than my own; but, for myself, I must have St. Philip's gift, who saw the sacerdotal character on the forehead of a gaily attired youngster, before I can by my own wit acquiesce in it, for antiquarian arguments are altogether unequal to the urgency of visible facts."[1]

It is needless to pursue the subject further. A doctrine not taught in the Holy Scriptures can have no claim on the acceptance of Christians. But this doctrine, in addition, has no basis in the Fathers of the second century: subsequent history does not sustain the allegation of an unbroken chain of prelatical ordinations, nor of canonical and regular ordinations. The channel through which the supposed ministerial authority comes is the Papacy, and the Papacy has revoked the gift. God commissions no man to preach error, and of two Churches avowing contradictory dogmas, both, it is possible, may be in error, but one of them certainly must. The ablest and best men who have adorned the English Church in past generations, repudiate alike the doctrine and the consequences which flow from it. The whole thing is a cunning device of priestcraft first and last.

Perhaps in no other profession except the ecclesiastical would a claim so preposterous be entertained for a moment. It would scarcely recommend a medical gentleman, were he to profess that he was the lineal successor of Æsculapius, or even Luke, "the beloved physician;" nor would it do much for a lawyer that he could trace up his forensic pedigree to the first Lord Chancellor; or higher still, to "a certain orator named Tertullus." A man might not prove to be a good schoolmaster, even though he was appointed by somebody who was appointed by Dr. Arnold, and could trace up his scholastic genealogy to Roger Ascham. By all means let the physician take out his degree in the most orthodox form;

[1] Newman's *History of his Religious Opinions*, note *E*, p. 341.

and let the lawyer be called to the bar with all the formalities that the benchers prescribe; and let the teacher have his certificate signed in due form by the College of Preceptors. But, after all, men of sense will estimate his value, not so much by the possession of his diploma, as by the practical ability which he displays, and by the results of his labour. If the physician has fair success in healing his patients, and the lawyer in convincing the jury, and the teacher in training his pupils, people will desire no better evidence of his claims. This was the very test to which one higher than any bishop was wont to appeal: "Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men." Paul did not, however, trouble himself much about any human appointment. He had no longings to be bishoped or priested; he seems to have been quite satisfied with his divine call, and with what he had received near the outset of his career from the "prophets and teachers" at Antioch.

The design of the Lord Jesus in appointing a ministry and in organizing a Church, was that the gospel might be preached to all nations, and ordinances might be administered in order to train believers for the kingdom of glory. This is to be done in such a manner as to secure the best possible agents, and to have the work done till the end of time in the most efficient manner. Candidates for office are to have their gifts and qualifications tried, and those approved are to be set apart in due form. This was done in apostolic times by the apostles themselves, or by the ordinary teachers assembled in presbytery. When the first presbyter rose to be acknowledged as the bishop, and the bishop developed into a prelate, the ordination, once a rite in which they all joined, was performed by him as representing his colleagues, but was soon regarded as his special work. Episcopal ordination was the practice throughout the Middle Ages.

The Reformation virtually abolished Prelacy, and in no part of Protestant Christendom except in England, was there any attempt made to continue the chain of prelatic ordination. The Reformed Churches everywhere else restored their ancient rights to the New Testament bishops or pastors. Churches exercised their undoubted power, not to institute new ordinances or rites, but to fall back on divine and

scriptural forms. What God has already instituted and approved, every Church has a right to adopt, and no man has a right to forbid. The ministry, when their eyes opened to the doctrines of grace, and to all the glory of divine revelation, ceased to trouble themselves about ecclesiastical genealogies and other questions which did not edify, and only hid the truth from the eyes of men; and under the guidance of the Reformers they aimed, so far as circumstances permitted, to restore the ancient model. The true apostolical succession is to come to our work in the Church of God with faith and love in our hearts, and with the message of truth upon our lips, having received from good men, who were in office before us, the same ordination that the seven deacons of Jerusalem received from the twelve apostles, and that Barnabas and Saul received from the prophets and teachers at Antioch, and that Timothy received "with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." With such an ordination, any man anxious to serve God in the Church may be satisfied. If any man long for something more, it is possible he has something else in view than the glory of God and the salvation of souls. In order to work successfully for an object so grand and noble, it is neither helpful nor necessary to be a link in the chain of prelatical ordinations from the apostles downwards, or to derive authority from men who, by their own admission, derive their authority from Rome.

CHAPTER VII.—THE PAPACY.

THE position claimed for the pope by the vast community over which he presides, is that he is "the true vicar of Christ, head of the whole Church, supreme judge of the faithful, father and teacher of all Christians." This doctrine is made to rest upon the foundation of three alleged facts:—

1. That the primacy of jurisdiction over the universal Church of God was conferred upon Peter directly by the Lord Himself.

2. That the Roman bishop is the successor of Peter. "Whosoever," it is said, "succeeds to Peter in this see does, by the institution of Christ Himself, obtain the primacy of Peter over the universal Church."

3. That the Roman Pontiff is infallible when he speaks *ex cathedra,* that is, "when discharging the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians; by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the universal Church."

In the *Dogmatic Constitution of the Church,* issued by the Vatican Council of 1870, these alleged facts are made to rest as their basis upon the following passages of Scripture:—

Jesus saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.—MATT. xvi. 15–19.

So when they had broken their fast, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto

him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, Tend my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. —JOHN xxi. 15–17.

Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not; and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren.—LUKE xxii. 31, 32.

These passages, along with John i. 42, which merely assigns to Simon the surname of Cephas or Petêr, are the only passages of Scripture quoted in the *Dogmatic Constitution* in support of the doctrine of the papal supremacy.

Our position is, that these passages of the word of God, fairly interpreted, do not bear out the doctrine which it is sought to rest upon them; they contain no evidence that a primacy of jurisdiction was conferred upon Peter, or that the Roman bishop is the successor of Peter, or that in Peter any immunity from error was ever promised to, or conferred upon, the pope. The inference we propose to draw, in case these facts are established, is, that the doctrine of the papal supremacy is without any scriptural foundation. The prelatic system presented in the Roman Church, running up into one great ecclesiastic who is supreme over all bishops, and who as visible head of the Church presides over Christendom, is, when viewed simply as a theory, more complete, more consistent, more rational, and more conducive to strength and unity than the system presented in Anglicanism; but if the fact turn out to be that the passages to which Rome appeals do not admit the interpretation which Rome puts upon them, then the system has no basis in the word of God. That fact is fatal to its acceptance by Christians, who prefer the light of divine revelation to the twilight of human tradition.

I. THE PRIMACY OF PETER.

There is this grain of truth in the Romish doctrine in regard to Peter, that he was in some respects the most dis-

tinguished of the twelve apostles. Every candid and intelligent man must admit this. In any ordinary society of a dozen men or more, it may always be observed that there is some one who, from personal endowments or other circumstances, will naturally take the lead, and be able to exercise influence upon his fellows. It was so among the twelve who were about the Lord. Peter was eminent among them for faith, courage, activity, quickness of perception, and readiness to speak his mind. Illustrations of these and other qualities may be found in his prompt confession of Christ, his hasty proposal on the Mount of Transfiguration, his ardent profession of attachment to the Master, and his rash act on the night of the betrayal. He had more individuality than any of his brethren. This personal prominence accounts for the frequency with which, in lists of the apostles, he is so often named first, and for the fact that Christ so often spoke to him when He meant what He said to be heard by all. But personal eminence among the class to which a man belongs, is a very different thing from saying that he is invested with the right of jurisdiction over them. Peter was invested with no such right, and the passages quoted do not prove the point which they are produced to support.

The Rock of the Church.

The argument derived from the words: "Thou art Peter (πέτρος), and on this rock (ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ)," is not so decisive as it seems. The play on the words *petros* (Peter) and *petra* (rock), no power of translation can make evident to the mere English reader. The difference between the two words in the original is one of termination only. Literally it would read thus: "Thou art a *rock*, and on this rock I will build my Church." The point of the whole observation turns on the meaning of the name Peter, which means a rock, and in considering this rock as the foundation of the Church. All this may be admitted, without understanding it to teach all that the Vatican divines profess to find in it.

The expression is too vague and difficult to entitle us to regard with certainty the Romish interpretation as the true sense. This is shown by the fact, that the early Christian

writers who lived before the Reformation are not agreed as to what the words really mean. The Vatican without hesitation interprets "the rock" as referring absolutely to Peter himself; but Tertullian, Origen, and even Cyprian, interpret it of all the apostles as well as Peter. Theodoret, Jerome, and Augustine understand by "the rock" Christ Himself; while Ambrose, Hilary, Chrysostom, and a host of others understand by it the truth confessed by Peter at the time which gave occasion to the words being spoken. Had this difference among commentators manifested itself only since the Reformation, it might be supposed that the adverse interpretation was dictated by a prejudiced hostility to the Roman claims; but the divergence is so old, and so manifest among Fathers whom that Church claims to be her own, as to produce the conviction that the meaning of the words is by no means clear. For this reason it is unsafe to accept too easily into our creed an important doctrine whose main basis is one of these disputed interpretations.

The main reason for not understanding the expression to refer to the truth that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God," in which Peter expressed his faith, is, that it does not explain, it seems rather to make unnecessary the words "thou art Peter;" and that it seems to run counter to the common idea pervading the New Testament, that the Christian society is not built upon principles so much as upon persons; that, in fact, the truth does not so much uphold the Church as that the Church is "the pillar and ground of the truth." Nor, though it be a great and blessed truth that Christ is the one and only foundation of the Church, does "the rock" here refer to Him absolutely; because that interpretation also would make unnecessary the words "thou art Peter," and it would be incongruous to represent in the one sentence Christ as both the builder and the basis on which the edifice rests. A speaker in certain circumstances might indeed be under some necessity to adopt some such irregularity of speech, as, for example, in instituting an ordinance, of which he himself is the author and at the same time the sum and substance. But in the case before us, there is no obvious necessity warranting the speaker to commit the rhetorical error of representing in the same sentence the same

person to be at once the architect and the foundation of a building.

To understand "the rock" in this passage as referring directly to Peter, has at least one merit of interpretation; it explains the significance of the introductory words, and shows reasons for their being there. It is as if Christ had said —"I give you a name expressive of your character and work, as you have just now done to me—Thou art a rock, and on this rock I will build my Church." This interpretation is consistent with the context; it is in harmony with other parts of divine revelation; and the only possible objection to it is that it has often been perverted to support a system of ecclesiastical polity unknown to the apostolic age, and which developed in after times into a gigantic tyranny.

The other apostles did not understand, that the Lord in addressing these words to Peter conferred upon him any official pre-eminence. Had it been otherwise, considering the carnal notions which they entertained at the time, they could not have concealed some feeling of jealousy towards the man who had obtained such pre-eminence; and yet in all the gospel history there is not on their part the slightest trace of jealousy towards Peter, and nothing which betrays the faintest suspicion of his having received from the Lord any ecclesiastical authority over them. Not only is this so, but at a subsequent period—even at the Last Supper (Luke xxii. 14)—we find that pre-eminence among them is yet an unsettled question, and that they are discussing among themselves who should be the greatest. Is it likely that they would have disputed among themselves on the matter, or that the two sons of Zebedee would have sent Salome to prefer a request to Jesus on the subject, had it entered into their thoughts that the subject was already decided by the words addressed to Peter? If the apostles themselves did not understand the words to confer any official authority on Simon, under what necessity are we to do so?

In a secondary sense Peter may be regarded as "this rock," without in any way admitting the Roman inference from that fact. We can never go behind the statement of the apostle—"Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. iii. 11). Christ

is indeed the foundation of the Church, the chief corner-stone, elect, precious. But to this we must add another passage which speaks of the saints as "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner-stone" (Eph. ii. 20). This shows that there is a secondary sense in which the apostles constitute the foundation of the Church; and if so, then Peter is in the foundation, for among these apostles he was the most eminent. This interpretation is strengthened when we bring forward the passage, 1 Pet. ii. 3–5, in which Christ is represented as the chief corner-stone, believers the living stones coming to Christ, and the result a spiritual house—a Christian temple of which Christ and the apostles and prophets constitute the basis, and in which every saved soul finds a place. The whole idea is expressed in the beautiful language of the Apocalypse—"The walls of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

The position taken by Peter fully justifies this highly figurative language of the Master. During all His public ministry, Peter stood at His side; he was with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration, and in the garden of Gethsemane at the moment of His arrest. He stood on Mount Olivet on the day He was taken up. When the Holy Spirit fell on the disciples, he was there to tell sinners of the crucified, whom God had made both Lord and Christ, and to invite them to come to Him by faith and repentance. In those glorious days, when the Church was increased by daily additions of such as were being saved, Peter occupied the most conspicuous place. To join the Church, was for a man to unite himself to Peter and to the apostles who were about him. Till the Spirit was shed abroad by the risen Lord, Peter was no doubt weak, self-confident, and cowardly enough; now he is a new man, strong in the strength of God, firm and solid as a rock on which the rage of man may beat and break, and it remains unshaken.

In the light derived from the parallel passages, the mystery of the text disappears. The Church spoken of is the congregation of God's saints, not the professing Church merely; for none has a place in the spiritual edifice, who does not himself come as a living stone to Christ the chief corner-stone. Of this grand edifice—"the habitation of God through the

Spirit," Christ is the foundation in a sense peculiarly His own; all the saints of all the ages rest on Him. The twelve apostles, chosen specially by the Master to plant Christianity among the nations and to gather Jew and Gentile into the one fold, come next after Jesus, and form along with Him the centre and foundation of the great Christian society. Among the foundation stones of the edifice, Peter is a rock, conspicuous among his fellows for solidity and strength, for gifts and graces, for services and sufferings, In what else does Peter differ from his brethren, so far as can be known from other parts of the New Testament? They were foundation stones as well as he, for the Church is built upon the apostles; but he is a rock as compared with them, that is, he is distinguished among them for talents and labours and success. We conclude, therefore, that it was personal superiority among his brethren, and not any primacy of jurisdiction, which was indicated by the memorable word—"Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church."

The Keys of the Kingdom.

The contradictory interpretations which Romish writers fasten on the words, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," do not stand in need of any elaborate reply. To state them is enough to refute them. Pope Innocent III. quotes these words to prove that the emperor is subject to the pope. Others cite them to show, that to the pope there belongs not only a spiritual but a temporal supremacy—a power granted from heaven, not merely to reign over the Church, but to absolve subjects from their allegiance, and to deprive kings of their crown. Others use these words to support the doctrine that there is committed to the clergy divine authority to pardon sin, to release souls from purgatory, and to shut out from heaven those under Church censure. Others understand them to mean, that the power of granting or refusing salvation belongs to the pope alone, and put upon them the coarse and literal interpretation, that the keys which open or lock the gates of heaven hang at his girdle. An expert Romish controversialist can use this passage to express any meaning, which for the time happens

to serve his purpose, and many think it justifiable to impose upon it any interpretation, however extravagant, which they suppose confers honour on Peter, or on the pope through him.

The change of figure in the words is obvious. He no longer speaks of the Church as a building—a spiritual house composed of living stones, and every stone a saint. He now speaks of the Church as a kingdom—"the kingdom of heaven," which is an idea entirely different. The aspect of the kingdom here presented is the visible Church—the society of the people of God as existing on earth, but actuated and governed by laws from heaven. The community of professing Christians in the world, is the idea which the author of the first Gospel uses this favourite expression to denote. It is a mixed community, composed of saints, indeed, but of not a few who are saints by profession only. To possess the keys of a kingdom, is to have power to admit the worthy, and to exclude the unworthy. He who carries the keys of a building can open the door or shut it at his pleasure. To give the keys to Peter is to endow him with authority to admit or to exclude persons at his pleasure. To him this privilege was granted in the first instance; and as the Church was designed to exist on earth till the close, it cannot die; the power of admission and of exclusion must be lodged in the hands of somebody till the end of time. This is a privilege which must always belong to those who preside and rule, chosen by the Church to serve, and acting by the authority of the Church's Head.

The special privilege of Peter consists in this, not that he and his successor in the Roman See are the only persons divinely commissioned to use the keys; but that he was the first out of a great multitude of Church rulers who are authorized to use this power. The key of doctrine opens the door to those that are outside; the key of knowledge supplies spiritual provision to those that are within; the key of discipline enables those who rule in the house to exclude the transgressor. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, made use of the key of doctrine, and was the first to open the door of the kingdom to the Jew (Acts ii.); and with the same key he was the first to open the kingdom to the Gentiles (Acts x.) by admitting Cornelius. From the day that Christianity is

embodied in a visible society, he takes the lead in the organization and instruction of its members. It also confirms the words of Christ, for Peter is the first to use the key of discipline, and to shut offenders out of the kingdom. He did so when Simon Magus offered him money to purchase the power of bestowing the Holy Ghost on any on whom he pleased to lay his hands. Peter immediately pronounced sentence on the culprit: "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." That word from the lips of Peter was virtually expulsion from membership in the kingdom (Acts viii.).

The keys originally granted to Peter are still in the hands of those who rule in the Church. Had the privilege first given to Peter been limited to him, and descended to nobody, the Church would cease to exist, or if it did exist, would fail to answer the end for which it was set up. Had nobody power to admit to its communion, the Church would soon die out for lack of members; had nobody power to exclude, it would soon degenerate into a corrupt and putrefying mass. The power exercised by Peter was exercised by others; notably by Paul in the case of the incestuous man, and in the case of Hymenæus and Alexander. Such a power is always attached to rule, and those who rule in the Church are the suitable persons to exercise the power. The prerogative special to Peter is that he was the first to use the keys. This privilege was personal to himself. Others afterwards did exercise a similar right of admitting and excluding in virtue of their office as Church governors; but as Peter's distinction was that he was the first to use the right, no other could be exactly in his position. Philip admitted to the kingdom, when he preached Christ to the eunuch and baptized him. Apollos opened the kingdom with the key of the gospel when "he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ." Paul excluded with the key of discipline, when he "delivered Hymenæus and Alexander over to Satan." Diotrephes usurped the keys, or, at least, turned them to an evil purpose, when he used them to cast the brethren out of the Church (3 John 10).

All Church officers, duly appointed to instruct and rule in the congregation, have the right in their own sphere to exercise similar authority as the occasion may arise. But none of these can possess the privilege conferred on Peter to be the first to open and to shut the kingdom. This privilege was entirely his own, and could not be handed to another, for it is a maxim of common sense as well as of Canon Law, that "personal privilege follows the person, and is extinguished with the person."[1] This principle, adopted into the law of the Roman Church, and sanctioned by the pope himself, makes it impossible that Peter could hand over to another the privilege of being the first to admit into the kingdom, and the first to exclude from it.

There are minds to which it may appear that the place of honour in a society which, during the lifetime of Peter, was comparatively weak, poor, scattered, and despised, was not, after all, a distinction of much value. In a worldly sense it certainly was not. It only procured for him rebuke, menace, stripes, imprisonment, exile. But it ought to be remembered that, to the true Christian, it is always the earthly distinction which is of little worth. It is something which he has no right to expect, and on which he knows better than to set his heart. The reward which he really prizes is the spiritual. To one who loves Christ and His cause as they ought to be loved, a place of honour in the kingdom, however unimportant to the carnal eye, is more to be esteemed than any civil distinction whatever. A saint would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

We do not stop to consider in this connection the latter part of the verse in regard to binding and loosing; for whether they refer, as some think, to the retention and remission of offences, or, as others believe, to the power of inspired legislation, the privilege conferred is not special to Peter, but was subsequently conferred upon all the apostles (Matt. xviii. 18). A privilege granted to eleven others as well as to himself, cannot be the special prerogative of Peter. The same remark is true of John xx. 23, which speaks of forgiving and retaining sin; it contains nothing peculiar to

[1] *Liber Sextus*, can. 7.

Peter, for it was addressed to him in common with the other apostles, Thomas excepted, who on that evening happened to be absent.

Feeding Christ's Sheep.

The Lord three times enjoined on Peter to feed His sheep —to feed His lambs. This injunction is a figurative manner of saying, Instruct old and young in the truths of salvation. The words point out what his duty is as a pastor, and carry in them an admonition to discharge that duty—an admonition which, coming so soon after Peter's fall and disgrace, was by no means out of place, and supplies proof of his restoration to favour and to the confidence of the Master. But the duty enjoined is the duty of every minister of the gospel no less than of Peter. The very business of the pastor's life is to provide both old and young with the spiritual food that imparts nourishment and strength. Christ Himself is the Chief Shepherd; every pastor is an under shepherd, entrusted with the charge of some portion of the flock, and it is his province to lead those under his care to the green pastures and the quiet waters. The elders of Ephesus received the same admonition from Paul: to "feed the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts xx. 28). Peter himself gave the same charge to the elders of the Churches of Asia Minor: "Feed the flock which is among you, taking the oversight thereof" (1 Pet. v. 2). A duty thus laid by the apostles upon the ordinary officers of the Church, and discharged by them often without any special commission from Peter (see Acts ix. 20, xviii. 27), could not have been Peter's special prerogative; nor does the inspired history lead us to believe that he ever assumed the position of pastor and teacher of all Christians which some claim for him. For the first few years he is, indeed, the most active and prominent of the founders of the Church; even as late as the Apostolic Council, A.D. 50, he is in common with James and John one of "the pillars" (Gal. ii. 9); but from that time onward Paul occupies the foreground and hides Peter from our sight. By mutual consent, Paul and he divide the world between them; Paul goes to the Gentiles, and the pagan

cities become the field of his labours and sufferings; Peter undertakes the more limited department of the circumcision, of preaching to the Jews; a division of labour which, if Peter had been divinely constituted supreme pastor of the Church visible, would, on his part, have been equivalent to the voluntary renunciation of the heaviest part of his work.

The historical account of the apostles and of Christianity supplied by the New Testament writers, is the best explanation of any difficulty which may be found in the words of the Lord. The practice of inspired men is at all times the best comment on the law by which they were guided. It shows how they understood their own commission. Inspired history gives no hint, not the slightest, that Peter pretended on any occasion to act as vicar of Christ, prince of the apostles, pastor and father of all Christians. Nor does it ever lead us to believe that the Christians of his own time saw in him anything but an able and earnest minister, zealous in preaching the gospel, endued with a wealth of supernatural power, labouring earnestly to spread Christianity, but who put forth no claim to rule men or Churches in any extravagant manner. He discharges his commission to feed the flock of Christ, perhaps with more success than many. Others, like Paul and the other apostles, fed the flock, without deriving their authority from Peter. To feed Christ's sheep and lambs, cannot therefore be Peter's special prerogative.

No official powers were conferred on Peter which were not conferred on other apostles as well. Was the Church built on Peter as on a rock? It was also built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone. Was Peter honoured with the possession of "the keys"? We find Paul and others, who held no commission from Peter, admitting to the kingdom and excluding from it. Was Peter enjoined to feed the sheep and the lambs? We find Paul as well as Peter enjoining the same duty upon uninspired men — the elders of the Churches. Duties that others performed in common with him, and by an apostolic authority independent of him, could not have been privileges peculiar to Peter. In that case, what was the honour conferred upon Peter for his intelligent and timely profession of faith? Simply this — eminence among his

brother apostles, and leadership in the first foundation and administration of the Church. Eminence and leadership, however, are not official prerogatives ; they are simply personal honours founded upon personal qualities, personal services, personal sufferings. But when a man dies, all that is personal dies with him. His talents, his attainments, his services cannot be transmitted to his own child, much less to a stranger. Even privileges founded on personal peculiarities cannot be handed over at pleasure to another. A man at death may bequeath to an heir his money, his estate, his title, his position in the world, or in some instances, his office in the commonwealth ; but he cannot, though ever so desirous to do so, bequeath to him his industry, his character, or the learning which he has so painfully gathered. What is personal to the man himself, he cannot hand to his successor. Again we revert to the maxim of the Canon Law already quoted — "Personal privilege follows the person, and is extinguished with the person."

Peter's primacy, if his position among his fellow-apostles can be properly so called, was entirely personal. Follow him who would as an apostle and preacher of the gospel, he could not be, as Peter was, a "rock" among the foundation stones of the Christian temple. Carry "the keys" who may, he can never be as Peter was, the first to open and the first to shut the gates of "the kingdom." Though thousands upon thousands of pastors have since fed the flock of Christ, Peter was the first to do it after the Lord had returned to heaven and left His sheep in the wilderness alone. Such a position in the kingdom is indeed a position of eminence and honour, but it is a position so personal and so unique, that no man however willing could confer it on his successor.

Facts which confirm this View.

That the position of Peter in the New Testament Church was a position of personal distinction, not superiority of office, is confirmed by other considerations :—

1. Every new office requires a new name. If Peter held an office in the Church visible to which none was appointed but himself, it seems clear that this office so distinguished

must have had a name. Moderns, indeed, have a name for that office, but we need not expect to find it in the Holy Scriptures. No such name is given to Simon by any inspired writer. His personal designation of Peter or Cephas is well known, but no official title distinct from that given to the eleven is ever given to him. People now call the man who fills an office, which they suppose Peter once filled, Head of the Church, Vicar of Christ, Chief Pastor of all Christians, Pope and Father. But none of these exalted names is ever given in the word of God to Simon, son of John. He is not even called Prince of the Apostles. From the fact that he received no official title different from that of the other apostles, we infer that he held no office that they did not hold. We conclude therefore that he was not their permanent head.

2. Had the eleven understood from what the Lord said of "the rock" and "the keys" that any official supremacy had been given to Peter, the ambitious hopes cherished by them in their unenlightened stage would have been rudely checked, and their minds would have settled down to a condition of humble acquiescence or chronic discontent. But notwithstanding these words, their rivalry and thirst for power seem as ardent as before. Even on the night of the betrayal, as it drew near the close, the question of supremacy which James and John had raised was still an unsettled matter, and to our surprise we read (Luke xxii. 24) "there was a strife among them who should be accounted greatest." How did Christ comment on this unexpected incident? Did He say that the vacant post was already filled? Did He say that the crown was already given to Peter, and could not be given to any other of them? Nothing of the kind. His answer in effect is that there must be no official lordship among the ministers of Christ—"The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors: but you shall not be so." No words could be more decisive as to the position of Simon Peter.

3. Other well-known incidents strengthen the opinion that Peter's position among the apostles was one of personal distinction, not of official supremacy. Instead of his exercising authority over the apostles, the apostles exercise authority over him; thus, when the news reached the apostles at

Jerusalem that Samaria had received the word of God, "they *sent* unto them Peter and John" (Acts viii. 14). When Peter returned to Jerusalem after baptizing Cornelius, he was called to account by the Jewish Christians (Acts xi.) for eating and drinking with the Gentiles; and he, whom it pleases some to call Head of the Church, was actually put on his defence for conduct, no doubt right enough in itself, but the propriety of which the Jewish prejudices of many did not permit them to see. It does not look like supremacy, that the apostle meekly defends his conduct by a plain statement of the facts of the case, pointing out how he was led in the providence of God to act as he had done. Had he been constituted the official Pastor and Teacher of all Christians, he no doubt would have taken a different line; he would have stood upon his rights, and pled that he was acting strictly within the limits of authority assigned him by the Lord.

It is worthy of note also that in the apostolic council (Acts xv.), Peter does not sit as president, but offers his opinion as any other member would; the proposal accepted by the meeting is suggested by another, not by him; and the decree sent forth ran in the name, not of Peter, but of "the apostles and elder brethren." Afterwards, when he went down to Antioch, his want of moral courage justly exposed him to reproof; and Paul, his junior in the apostleship, resisted him to the face, because he was to be blamed (Gal. ii. 11).

It is also remarkable that the Church in the apostolic age is never spoken of as subject to any human officer whatever, but only to Him who is "the shepherd and bishop of souls;" nor is any appeal from any individual or congregation ever carried to Peter; nor is there any ecclesiastical act assigned to him in Scripture, which is not equally competent to any of the other apostles. All these facts go to show, that while he was held in high honour by his brethren, they did not regard him as holding any official supremacy over them or the Church.

4. Had it been the design of the Lord to appoint any man His own Vicar, and give him rank as permanent Head of the Church visible, it is most extraordinary that He should never refer in the New Testament to a fact so important. He has told us of "one Lord, one faith, one baptism;" how very strange that under no circumstances has He ever spoken of

"the one Pope!" Had He appointed any man His representative on earth, it is not likely that the Holy Spirit, in enumerating the gifts which an ascended Saviour bestowed upon men, would have omitted the first and greatest of all. In 1 Cor. xii. 28 we have a list of these gifts. Had the Lord intended Peter and the pope at Rome to be His representatives in the world, the Vicar of Christ would of a certainty have been the first named. But Paul knows no higher office in the Church on earth than the apostleship—an office common to twelve men all living at once. "God hath set some in the Church"—not the pope, the cardinals, the prelates, but "first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles," and so on. The fair inference from this is, that so far as known to the Apostle Paul, the apostleship is the highest gift bestowed on the Church; the popedom is not mentioned.

5. The impression left by Gal. ii. 7 is, that Peter stood to the Jews in the same relation as Paul did to the Gentiles; the gospel of the uncircumcision was entrusted to Paul, as the gospel of the circumcision was entrusted to Peter. But the relation which Paul bore to the heathen world, he himself clearly explains—"I was appointed a preacher and an apostle, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth" (1 Tim. ii. 7). But elsewhere we learn (1 Cor. xi. 5), that Paul was "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles." That being so, it is manifest that Peter stood on the same level of official position as Paul; in other words, he is justly described as Paul describes himself—an apostle, a preacher, and a teacher. But there is every difference between a preacher and a pope, even although the preacher is an apostle.

6. It seems strangest of all, that if Peter filled the popedom, he did not know it himself. He does not address the Church or her officers as a superior would speak to subordinates over whom he ruled. His tone is not that of affected humility—"servant of the servants of God," but that of a man speaking to men—"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder." Nor does he hint that his ecclesiastical rank differs in the slightest degree from that of his colleagues, when he writes (2 Pet. iii. 2), "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets,

and of the commandments of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour." Such language leaves the impression that Peter himself was wholly unconscious of possessing that supremacy over the Church of God which many now are pleased to claim on his behalf.

II. IS THE POPE THE SUCCESSOR OF PETER?

If, as we have shown, the only distinction of Peter among his brethren was a personal pre-eminence that died with himself, it is a very small matter as to his successor, or whether he had any successor. We would therefore dispense entirely with this part of the inquiry as needless, were it not that in some quarters this is deemed a point of importance, and that the Vatican Council expressly states that "None can doubt, and it is known to all ages, that the holy and most blessed Peter, the prince and chief of the apostles, the pillar of the faith, and foundation of the Catholic Church, received the keys of the kingdom from our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind, and lives, presides, and judges to this day and always *in his successors the Bishops of the Holy See of Rome, which was founded by him, and consecrated by his blood.* Whence, whosoever succeeds to Peter in this see, does, by the institution of Christ Himself, obtain the primacy of Peter over the universal Church."[1] A statement of this kind deserves some examination. Upon this we remark:—

1. There is only one sentence in the Bible which in any way connects Peter with Rome. When that great apostle preached his Pentecostal sermon at Jerusalem, we learn that among his audience there were present "strangers from Rome" (Acts ii. 10). Now this supplies a rather narrow basis for the allegation that Peter visited Rome, founded the Holy See, and handed down the primacy of the universal Church to his successors, the Roman bishops. Yet in all the New Testament there is no other passage which in any way connects Peter with the "eternal city."

2. The statements, as well as the omissions, in the inspired history combine to show that his life and labours were mainly devoted to another sphere. In the early scenes of Christianity,

[1] *Dogmatic Constitution*, chap. ii.

from the ascension to the martyrdom of Stephen, Peter is the prominent figure, and does not appear to have been once absent from Jerusalem. In 38 A.D., Philip, driven from Jerusalem in consequence of the persecution that arose about Stephen, preaches with success in Samaria, and Peter is sent down, in order that by his apostolic power he may bestow upon the converts the Holy Ghost. Soon after, about the year 40, he makes his circuit through Judea, and baptizes Cornelius at Cæsarea. On returning to Jerusalem he is taken to task by the Jewish Christians for his intercourse with the Gentiles. He is still at Jerusalem when the famine comes, and that same year Herod puts him in prison (44 A.D.). On escaping from prison he goes to his "own place," which is understood to mean retirement from Jerusalem during the remainder of Herod Agrippa's reign. He is present again in Jerusalem at the apostolic council, A.D. 50; and a little later he is found at Antioch, where, for his weakness and vacillation, Paul withstands him to the face. From this point Peter drops out of sight in a great measure. Only two glimpses are caught of him again; in 57, when Paul wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians, Peter, accompanied by his wife, was out on missionary journeys (1 Cor. ix. 5); and when he wrote his own First Epistle to the Christians of the Jewish Dispersion, he was away at Babylon in the remote east (1 Pet. v. 13). Not the slightest hint occurs in the New Testament which leads one to suspect that Peter ever visited Rome.

3. The omissions of all reference to him in connection with Rome are no less convincing and instructive. In A.D. 58, Paul wrote an elaborate Epistle to the Roman Christians, in which he speaks of their faith being "proclaimed throughout the whole world" (Rom. i. 8), but never once alludes to Peter as the father and the founder of their Church. In 61, Paul is brought a prisoner to Rome, and the Christians went forth to meet him as far as "the Market of Appius and the Three Taverns;" but there is no allusion to Peter among their number. For two whole years he instructed his Jewish brethren "in his own hired dwelling" at Rome; but still Peter is not mentioned. From his prison he writes in succession Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, to the Ephesians, and Philippians; but in none of them all is there the slightest

allusion to Peter. Within the next three years (63–66) the First Epistle to Timothy and that to Titus are written; but still there is no reference to Peter. Had Peter been at Rome when his brother apostle stood at the bar, he would certainly have been found at his side; but Paul complains, "At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me,"— a sure proof that Peter could not have been in Rome at that time (2 Tim. iv. 16). When Paul wrote his last extant Epistle— when he said, "I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come," even then there is no mention of Peter, and the dying apostle sends for Timothy and Mark, and says, "Only Luke is with me." These omissions would be among the most remarkable in literature, on the supposition that Peter was at Rome all this time, and was the first bishop of the Roman Church and the founder of the Roman See. There is not a line in the New Testament which makes it necessary to believe that ever Peter set foot in the "City of the Cæsars."

Why, then, is it generally believed that Peter visited Rome? Purely from the statements of four men, one of whom wrote near the end of the first, and the others near the end of the second century.

Clement of Rome (A.D. 97).—Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured, not one or two, but numerous labours; and when he had at length suffered martyrdom, departed to the place of glory due to him. —*1st Ep. to Corinthians* v.

This merely states that Peter died a martyr, but gives no indication of time or place.

Dionysius of Corinth (178).—Thus likewise you, by means of this admonition, have mingled the flourishing seed that had been planted by Peter and Paul at Rome and Corinth. For both of these having planted us at Corinth, likewise instructed us, and having in like manner taught in Italy, they suffered martyrdom about the same time.—In Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* ii. 25.

Irenæus of Lyons (188–192 A.D.).—Matthew also issued a written gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome and laying the foundations of the Church.— *Heresies*, iii. 1.

Caius, Presbyter at Rome (199–218 A.D.).—And I can show the trophies of the apostles. For if you choose to go to the Vatican or Ostian Road, you will find the trophies of those who founded this Church.—In Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* ii. 25.

4. These are the oldest testimonies quoted from the uninspired writers in proof of Peter's connection with Rome. Clement, the oldest of them, does not touch the subject at all; he speaks only of Peter's martyrdom, but does not specify either time or place. Dionysius and Irenæus, the first who do touch the subject, wrote, both of them, more than a hundred years after the event recorded. Neither of them is a contemporary, nor belongs to the generation next after the contemporary, and therefore neither is a witness in the true and proper sense of the word. The evidence, accordingly, is not strictly historical. But if we consider that three writers of such high character as Dionysius of Corinth, Irenæus of Lyons, and Caius of Rome, living so far apart, and having no communication with each other, under circumstances which prevent the suspicion of collusion, all about the same time mention Peter's visit to Rome; and if we take into account the absence of any tradition that he suffered martyrdom elsewhere, we have reason for believing it probable that Peter both visited and suffered at Rome. But it is evident that a mere probability such as this, and it is no more than a probability, is very slight historical evidence on which to rest the corner-stone of a system; and yet without this fact the Romish idea of the supremacy of the pope has no basis. If Peter did not visit Rome and found the See, the pope cannot be his successor. Even if Peter did plant and water with his blood the Christian Church at Rome, that is no good reason for the Roman Church asserting its pre-eminence over other Churches. Did not a greater than Peter die at Jerusalem?

5. The Vatican statement implies that Peter was the first bishop of Rome; the bishops of the Roman See are said to be "his successors." This statement is supported by no historical evidence, inspired or uninspired. After the second century and onwards, bold assertions of this kind are found in later writers, some of whom were interested in supporting the Roman claims to domination, and none of whom, owing to their separation from the alleged event in point of time, could have had any personal knowledge of the fact. Their statements therefore are merely opinion, not fact, and cannot be regarded as evidence. Besides, various ideas are conveyed to various minds by such vague statements. Many who say that Peter

was the first bishop of Rome seem to mean by the expression that Peter was the first pope, exercising papal authority over all the apostles and all the Churches. In that sense of the expression we simply deny that Peter was the first bishop of Rome, on the ground that it is not stated in the Scriptures, and that it would be contradictory to much which is stated there. Supposing such a universal ecclesiastical supremacy had been established in the apostolic age, it would be unaccountable how soon it vanished, leaving behind it no trace in the extant literature of the first and second centuries. But if it means that Peter, on the supposition that he visited Rome, acted while he was at large as chief pastor of the local Church, we have no reason to disbelieve that such precedence was assigned to him. James no doubt acted in the same way while resident apostle at Jerusalem. An apostle was chief ruler in any Church which for the time he condescended to honour with his presence. But there is no reason, not the slightest, to believe that Peter was bishop of Rome in any sense different from that of any other Church which he visited. He founded the Church at Jerusalem; and we know, on unimpeachable evidence, that he visited Samaria, Joppa, Cæsarea, Antioch, and Babylon. We do not know, on any evidence of equal strength, that he visited Rome. But supposing that he did, no man can explain satisfactorily why any prerogative that he is supposed to possess should go to his successors at Rome, and not to his successors at Cæsarea, Antioch, Babylon, or Jerusalem. Further, if Peter could secure the primacy for the Church at Rome, can any one assign a sound, substantial reason why John did not secure the second place for Ephesus, and why Paul did nothing in the same way for Corinth or Philippi?

6. Supposing Peter for a time to act as chief pastor of the Roman Christians, the question arises, did he transmit anything to his successors; and if so, what was the thing thus transmitted? Was it jurisdiction over the Church, and primacy among the apostles? We do not believe it, for the reasons already stated. He never exercised and never had jurisdiction over the universal Church, and therefore could not transmit to others what he himself never possessed. His only primacy among his brethren was a primacy of age, and labour, and talents, and sufferings; but that is a primacy

personal to a man, which cannot be transmitted. Even apostleship cannot be transmitted; an apostle had qualifications, powers, signs, which no man can exhibit now, from which we infer that the apostleship was not handed down to others. What then was handed over in this case? The care of a congregation planted at the door of Nero's palace, to which none could minister except at the peril of life; the privilege of preaching the gospel, of instructing the Church, of ruling in the congregation, of ministering to the necessities of human souls—the prerogative of labour and of dying in the service of Christ. This legacy the successor of Peter in Rome received, and for several centuries he was, so far as now known, not unworthy of it. The successors of Peter at Rome, first presbyters, then bishops, then prelates, and finally popes, succeeded him simply as pastors of the Church at Rome. In this sense hundreds of pastors succeeded apostles. Peter, and Paul, and John, and other apostles were succeeded at Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Athens, and in a hundred other places by presbyters or pastors, whom it was the fashion of after ages to call bishops. In short, any city in which an apostle planted a Church, or which he visited in his missionary journeys, could, in the second and third century and after, produce a man who might fairly say that he was the successor of Peter or Paul; that is, that he ministered to a Church originally planted by one or other of these apostles. But what right, divine or human, has the successor of Peter at Rome to assume supremacy over Paul's successor at Corinth, or John's at Ephesus, or over Peter's own successor at Antioch or Jerusalem.

7. The Roman bishop, however, in the course of ages, achieved a supremacy which, though repudiated alike by the Greek and Protestant Churches, is even at this day acknowledged by perhaps the majority of professing Christians. It would be a mistake to suppose that this has been done out of any deference to the New Testament, or because the Lord said to Peter, "Thou art a rock (Peter);" "I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven;" "Feed my sheep." The supremacy attained is due entirely to other causes. It was only by slow and painful steps, extending over centuries, that this supremacy was achieved. The fact of Rome's being the

capital of the Empire, and the seat of government for nearly three centuries after the origin of Christianity, gave it the start; the number of its people and clergy gave the Roman Church importance; its members were wealthy, and intelligent, and charitable; it suffered for the faith, and in general took the orthodox side in the doctrinal controversies; while the absence of the emperor and other civil potentates after the third century gave the bishop room to grow, for no magnates overshadowed him with their glory. From causes such as these, all operating in one direction, the Roman Church in course of time attained an eminence which other Churches did not reach, and the Roman bishop, by arts persistently followed from generation to generation, made good his claim to rank above other bishops. While the spiritual supremacy was in course of attainment, an appeal to divine right would naturally strengthen the claim; it was remembered that Christ said to Peter, "Thou art a rock," "I will give thee the keys," "Feed my sheep;" and tradition said that Peter died at Rome. These facts were pressed into the service, and in an ignorant age, when few understood and still fewer could read the Scriptures, an argument whose weakness at present nothing can hide, was counted irresistible.

The conclusion to which we find ourselves drawn by the facts of the case is, that while it is probable that Peter visited Rome, and while at liberty acted for some short time as pastor, still the pastors of the Roman Church who followed him did not succeed him in any different manner from that in which other pastors succeeded other apostles; and although future pastors or bishops, so called, instructed and ruled a Church which he once instructed and ruled, they could not derive from Peter any jurisdiction over men or Churches which Peter himself did not possess. To say otherwise is to maintain without reason the unscriptural and unhistorical allegations which lie at the root of the papal supremacy.

III. THE INFALLIBILITY.

The papal supremacy grew up independently, and had reached its zenith entirely apart from the infallibility. Although the latter had often been put forward as the

opinion of individual theologians, it was not till the Vatican Council of 1870 that it was officially recognised as the doctrine of the Church. It was adopted in the following words:—

"We teach and define, that it is a dogma divinely revealed that the Roman pontiff when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when discharging the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the universal Church, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, the same is possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith or morals; and that therefore the definitions of the Roman pontiff are of themselves irreformable, and not dependent upon the consent of the Church."[1]

This dogma includes at least the following propositions:—

1. That the pope is infallible only when he speaks officially.

2. An official utterance is a special declaration, given only in his capacity of pastor and teacher of all Christians.

3. The doctrine which his *ex cathedra* pronouncement converts into truth for all Christians, must concern faith or morals.

4. The infallibility which he possesses is only that with which Christ willed His Church to be endowed in defining a doctrine regarding faith and morals, and which belongs to him only in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority.

5. The source of this infallibility is the divine aid promised to the pope in Peter.

6. The purpose of his so defining is, that the doctrine so defined be held by the Universal Church, that is, that it be binding upon all Christians.

7. Definitions thus pronounced, being beyond the possibility of error, are irreversible and unchangeable in their nature.

8. The Vatican Council pronounces all this to be a doctrine divinely revealed.

These propositions cover a great extent of ground, and raise a variety of knotty questions. As no exception is made, the reception of this dogma binds a man to believe in the

[1] *Dogmatic Const.* chap. iv.

official declarations of no less than 257 men, who preceded the present pontiff, many of whom have given us no reason to think that they were aware of their own infallibility, but each of whom, if the dogma be true, is as far above the possibility of error as Leo XIII. Not only so, but the dogma binds a man to receive, with all the confidence that justly attaches to divine revelation, any sentiment whatever regarding faith or morals, which the reigning pontiff or any of his successors in the remote future may be pleased to declare officially, however absurd or contradictory it may appear. In no official utterances of any pope, past or future, does the dogma permit us to say henceforth that any error is to be found. It is now claimed for the Church, and denied to the State, the right of defining how far the sphere of faith and morals is to extend.[1] If that claim is admitted, the pope, at his pleasure, may make any secular or political subject a question of faith and morals, and thus bring it within the sphere over which he claims sole jurisdiction. In the dogma of infallibility, therefore, very momentous consequences are involved.

The dogma of infallibility has no real basis in Holy Scripture. It speaks, indeed, of assistance promised to the pope in the blessed Peter; but on turning to the inspired word, we find it neither mentions nor alludes to such a dignitary, nor distinguishes him in any way from other Christians. There is no promise to Peter or his successors, nor any allusion to infallibility, in the words, "the rock," "the keys," and "feeding the sheep," the only words of privilege addressed to Peter and not to the other apostles. Possibly the Council may refer to the words of Christ spoken to Peter, and given in Luke xxii. 31, 32:—

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not: and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren."

But there is not found in this passage any promise to the pope, nor even to Peter, of infallibility when speaking officially on a question of faith or morals. Whatever it says, it says to Peter individually, as much so indeed as when it was said to him on another memorable occasion: "Get thee

[1] Manning's *Cæsarism and Ultramontanism*, p. 40.

behind me, Satan; thou art a stumbling-block unto me; for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." Matt. xvi. 23. Peter, in his representative character, is no more addressed in the one passage than he is in the other. The passage in Luke refers entirely to Peter as an individual believer, to that Satanic agency tempting him to deny the Lord; to the divine aid afforded him in his special trial; to his grievous sin; to his subsequent restoration to favour; and to the practical use he was to make of his own sad experience in strengthening his fellow-believers to resist and overcome the assaults of temptation. The answer of Peter, "I am ready to go with Thee to prison and to death," implies that he did not understand the words as conferring a privilege, which was to distinguish him from his brethren, and which he was to hand down to a long line of ecclesiastical successors; but rather understood it to refer to some extraordinary trial and possible defection, which he was only too confident that he had courage to encounter, and sufficient strength to overcome. The whole passage is personal to one individual, experiential, practical, in a high degree; nothing but the exigencies of a doctrine, totally wanting in support from Scripture, could induce any man to press this passage into the support of the infallibility of the pope.

Even the unanimous consent of the Fathers, which some receive as a sure rule of interpretation, cannot be fairly alleged in support of the interpretation which finds papal infallibility in Luke xxii. 31. Ambrose of Milan, one of the most admired of the Latin Fathers, understands it in a practical sense, "Beware of the world; beware of boasting." Cyril of Alexandria comments upon it thus: "What ineffable love of man! Before he sinned, he is already pardoned, and replaced in his apostolic dignity." The venerable Bede paraphrases the words, and represents the Lord as saying in effect: "As I have by prayer protected your faith, lest it should fail by the temptation of Satan, so do you remember to raise and comfort by the example of your patience the weaker brethren, lest perhaps they may despair of pardon." Trent and the Vatican agree in saying, that Scripture is not to be interpreted contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers. Here are three of the most esteemed ancient expositors, who see in the

words of Christ nothing but a spiritual and practical meaning. It seems clear enough that modern writers, who interpret it to mean a promise of divine assistance to the pope, made in blessed Peter, cannot plead for their exposition the unanimous consent of the Fathers.

It was not, however, considerations founded upon Holy Scripture which induced the Council to proclaim the doctrine of papal infallibility. That doctrine was universally assumed to be true; the main question considered in the Council being, whether the affirmation of it at the time could be regarded as opportune or not. It was urged in its favour, that the promulgation of it would restore the broken unity and coercive power of the Church; that multitudes outside the Church would be drawn into her communion by the assurance of finding there a living, authorized, unerring guide to whom they could come to have their doubts satisfied and their scruples removed; that it would facilitate the conversion of pagans; that no time was so suitable for the proclamation of the doctrine, as when all the bishops were so devoted to the See of St. Peter; and that the definition would gratify the aged Pontiff Pius the Ninth, and console him for the loss of his temporal dominions. The dogma was thus assumed to be true. It was taken for granted that a General Council could not err, that the Vatican Council of 1869 was œcumenical, and that if the Vatican were only to affirm the dogma with moral unanimity, then as a matter of fact it must be divinely revealed. When the minority asked the majority to show some declaration of Scripture in its favour, the only answer was to repeat the passage already considered, to the effect that the Lord prayed for Peter that his faith should not fail. When it was said that the Council ought to be cautious in affirming a doctrine that is in direct opposition to historic fact, the answer invariably was that fact must yield to dogma —that faith must conquer history.

That the doctrine is in opposition to historic truth, as well as without basis in solid scriptural statement, there can be no manner of doubt.

Callistus, who was Roman bishop from 219 till 223, is branded by Hippolytus, one of the orthodox Fathers, as "an impostor and a knave." He denied the distinction of persons

in the Godhead, and "established a school of theology in opposition to the Church." If we can trust Hippolytus, Pope Callistus was a heretic, and something worse.[1]

LIBERIUS was bishop of Rome from 352 till 366, during the heat of the Arian controversy. He was banished to Thrace by the Arian Emperor Constantius, and in order to regain his freedom signed a creed stating "that there are *two* persons of the Father and the Son, and that the Father is the greater." "This," said the heretical pontiff, "I receive with willing mind, I contradict in nothing, I agree to it, I follow it; it is held by me." Well might Hilary, the Athanasius of the West, say of this fallen pontiff, the subscriber of an Arian Creed—"Again and for the third time, anathema to thee, thou prevaricator Liberius."[2]

Popes, and councils confirmed by popes, are found to contradict each other. Thus Pope GELASIUS (492–496) clearly teaches that the reception of the Eucharist is essential to the salvation of infants.[3] But the Council of Trent, ratified by all the popes of the last three centuries, says that "Little children who lack the use of reason are not by any necessity obliged to the sacramental communion of the Eucharist."[4] Gelasius says one thing; Trent, and the popes who have since sanctioned it, say another. There is assuredly fallibility somewhere.

At the commencement of the Monothelite controversy, Pope HONORIUS I. (625–638) gave a written statement of his opinion on the theological question at the request of Sergius, Patriarch of Constantinople, in which he said, "Whence also we confess the *one will* of our Lord Jesus Christ." This was in 634. But the Sixth General Council, held at Constantinople in 680, asserted that in Christ there are *two* natural wills and two natural operations, without division, change, separation, or confusion: and it condemned the Patriarch Sergius and his adherents, adding these memorable words:—

"We anathematize all of these; but together with them we decree that the former pope, Honorius of old Rome,

[1] *Philosophumena*, ix. 7.
[2] Migne's *Pat. Lat.* vol. ix. col. 691.
[3] Epistola vii. in Migne, vol. lix. col. 38.
[4] *Canons and Decrees*, Sess. xxi. chap. 4.

should also be excluded from the Church and anathematized, since we find in his letter to Sergius that he followed the opinions of the latter in all points, and confirmed his impious dogmas." [1]

The sentence of anathema thus passed by the Council was subscribed by the papal legates, sanctioned by the reigning Pope Leo II., confirmed by the Emperor, and repeated in the Seventh and Eighth General Councils. It is remarkable, as Bishop Hefele notes, that the Sixth General Council passed judgment on a pope speaking *ex cathedra*, and condemned an official deliverance of his because he thereby sanctioned heresy, while the pope in office at the time concurred in the condemnation. This one fact of itself ought to dispose of the dogma of infallibility viewed in the light of history.

Cardinal Newman's attempt to evade the argument against infallibility demonstrates clearly the difficulty in his way. According to him, the words of Honorius were not *ex cathedra ;* they " were not accompanied with the intention " of exercising infallibility ; his condemnation only decides that Honorius in his own person was a heretic ; but he rather hopes and believes " that the anathema fell, not upon him, but *upon his letters* in their objective sense, he not intending personally what his letters legitimately expressed." [2] To all this it is a sufficient answer to say that the letters written to Honorius by the Eastern patriarch were official letters ; that his reply was no less public and official ; that it was pronounced by the Council a dogmatic letter ; and that the anathema did not fall on the letters, but, as the Council takes good care to say, upon " the pope of old Rome." [3] As to his intention, we know nothing apart from his words, which seem clear enough ; but if men are at liberty to say that a pope's intentions are the very opposite of his words, how are we to benefit by the infallibility ? The infallible would, in that case, need an infallible interpreter—a Dr. Newman—to stand at his side ; the one could give the infallible words, the other the infallible intention.

It seems almost needless to point out the civil effects of

[1] Hardouin, *Concilia*, vol. iii. col. 1599.
[2] *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*, pp. 107–109.
[3] " Honorium quondam Papam Romæ veteris."

the dogma. It is sufficient to say that it throws a kind of divine sanction over the supremacy, which the pope has again and again asserted over civil governments, and embodied in the *Unam Sanctam* of Boniface VIII. It gives force to the bulls which the popes of past ages were wont to issue against heretics, and may at any time be used to justify the revival of persecution. Its tendency is to weaken the civil allegiance of all who receive and honestly act upon the Vatican dogma as an article of faith, and to set their consciences at war with the governments which they are bound to obey. It alters the constitution of the Church; there is no further need in a time of controversy to refer to the decision of a council, now that an infallible pronouncement can be obtained from Rome without the inconvenience of convoking a council. Infallibility now makes for ever impossible any sort of reform which the pope does not approve, and he is not in the least likely to approve of any reform which touches himself. It degrades bishops; formerly they were the legislators of the Church, and when assembled in council they were, according to Roman belief, witnesses to tradition and the supreme depositaries of the faith; but in future the pope alone lays down the law—the duty of the bishops is simply to obey. The diocesan is no longer a member of that supreme court from which there comes ecclesiastical legislation; henceforth he is only an administrator, the mere executive servant of the pontifical government, the delegate of the pope. In time to come, the Scriptures, the Fathers, the Councils will weigh for nothing in controversy, and may be safely handed over for subjects of study to Protestants and Anglicans; henceforth the devout Catholic who receives the Vatican decree need go no farther than to the bulls, allocutions, encyclicals, or whatever other name is given to documents which convey the official declarations of the popes on doctrinal and moral subjects. Formerly the pope was a limited monarch, restrained in some degree by the judgment of the Fathers, the decrees of councils, or the pronouncements of the Canon Law; now he is an absolute sovereign, who by his own individual act can nullify anything which stands in his way, and who is entitled to receive implicit obedience from clergy and people on matters of discipline and government—subjects in regard to which no

infallibility is claimed. In fact, the recent dogma opens in future at the Vatican a great spiritual manufactory, from which an exhaustless supply of doctrine, precepts, and regulations can be procured as they are required, and every one of them bearing on its face the stamp of that one man, whose very dictum, in the estimation of those who believe the infallibility, is sufficient of itself to make an article of faith.

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